

CREATE A SUMPTUOUS FRENCH SUMMER FEAST

SAVEUR

Savor a World of  Authentic Cuisine

THE STEAK ISSUE

America's
Tastiest
Steak
Recipes

Make Your
Own Steak
Sauce

How to
Select the
Perfect
Cut

Our 7
Favorite
Steak
Houses



NUMBER 103

JULY 2007 \$5.00 (CANADA \$6.00)

www.saveur.com





IMAGINE YOUR LIFE IN A VIKING KITCHEN.



1-888-845-4641
vikingrange.com

Things to do while you're alive:

- ☐ Go to the Olympic Games
- ☐ Tour MoMA with a personal guide
- ☐ Visit an uninhabited island
- ☐ Write a screenplay
- ☐ Run with the bulls in Pamplona
- ☐ Go scuba diving in Belize
- ☐ Take your parents on a vacation
- ☐ Experience Mongolia's Naadam Festival
- ☐ Bungee jump
- ☐ Read and finish *Moby-Dick*
- ☐ Swim in all five oceans
- ☐ Celebrate Mardi Gras in New Orleans
- ☐ Ride the Orient Express
- ☐ Visit the Taj Mahal
- ☐ Drive on the autobahn
- ☐ See Iguazu Falls
- ☐ Heli-ski in British Columbia
- ☐ Play Pinehurst No. 2
- ☐ Ski first tracks at Deer Valley
- ☐ Go to the Super Bowl
- ☐ Find peace, love and understanding

Whatever's on your list of things to do in life, do it better with Visa Signature. Benefits like early access to artists such as Elvis

LIFE
TAKES
VISA



VISA SIGNATURE

Costello at the House of Blues can take you places regular rewards cards can't: the front row.



Presenting Visa's line of luxury rewards cards. Benefits beyond rewards. Dozens of card choices. Visa.com/signature.

Pat Shea, Brewer, Deschutes Brewery, Bend, Oregon





THE OREGON BEER LOVER

HE WHO NOT ONLY HOPES TO DEVOTE HIS LIFE TO THE
GLORY OF BEER – THAT WOULD NOT BE SO UNUSUAL –
BUT WHO ALSO FINDS A WAY TO GET AWAY WITH IT.

There once was a young man who, as young men have done for centuries, picked up his sleeping bag, kissed his mother goodbye and declared, "I will journey westward to find my fortune." And in this case he added, "I will tirelessly seek out the finest beers in all the land. And when I find them, I will learn their secrets and share them with the world." To this, she replied, "You are crazy, but I love you. Call when you get a real job, son."

And so, he went. It was a long and dusty road and soon he was quite thirsty. Which is fortunate, because by that time he had heard of a place called Oregon, where there are more artisan breweries than anyplace else in the world. He soon found himself in a charming village in the high desert of Central Oregon, where the red pines grow as tall as skyscrapers and the lizards scurry away from the coyotes. He brought his bald tires to a stop at the door of the Deschutes Brewery, where there was a legendary man making beers of the highest order. Not to be sacrilegious or anything, but our hero found the shiny vats of the brewhouse and the scent of hops in the air and the sound of Talking Heads on the boom box more splendid than all the naves of all the cathedrals of Europe. And so, he got to work, hoping to prove himself worthy.

First, he learned the innuendo of India pale ale. Then he studied the subtleties of stout. In a while, he mastered the peculiarities of pilsner and by and by, he became a master brewer himself (much to his mother's dismay). He now greets the many tired and thirsty travelers who come to Bend, Oregon with a big smile and a full pitcher. You could be one of them. Start planning your beer-lover's getaway at traveloregon.com or by calling 1-800-547-7842.

Like a fine wine, each comes
with its own set of adjectives.

2007

©2007 The Hershey Company



floral



Like grapes from a growing region, chocolate that comes from a single origin has its own unique flavors and tasting notes.

Explore Arriba, dark milk chocolate born from a rainforest of flowers, or São Tomé, intense dark chocolate from a volcanic island.



spicy

EXPLORE

CACAO RESERVE™

A NEW WORLD

www.cacareserve.com



SAVEUR

special issue
STEAK

AMERICAN PRIME

by BETTY FUSSELL

44 WHETHER IT'S A DRY-AGED RIB EYE or a supermarket london broil, our love of steak is all-consuming. Herein, we tell its story from pasture to plate—from the grasslands of a Montana ranch to the venerable steak houses of Chicago and New York to your own backyard grill. Also included: an illustrated glossary of butchers' cuts, tips on wine pairings, cooking guidelines, and more.



68

FEATURES

SOUTHERN HEAT

68 The bright, balanced cooking of Thailand's southern provinces reflects the region's multiculturalism. In fishing villages like Thale Noi and bustling towns like Trang, flavors from China, Malaysia, and India mingle on the plate.

BY JAMES OSELAND

DINNERS WITH ÉDITH

80 A home cook on France's Île de Ré gives an American friend some lessons in the French art of the table, reacquainting him with some of life's simpler joys.

BY DAVID MCANINCH

COVER

A porterhouse at Peter Luger steak house.

PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDRÉ BARANOWSKI

CUSTOMER SERVICE: Have a question? A problem? Here's how to contact us. For subscription-related queries, call our toll-free number (877/717-8925) or write to P.O. Box 420235, Palm Coast, FL 32142-0235. From outside the U.S., call 386/447-2592. Occasionally, we make portions of our subscriber list available to carefully screened companies that offer products and services we think may be of interest to you. If you do not want to receive these offers, please advise us at 877/717-8925. Send all editorial questions, complaints, and suggestions to 2 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10016. You may also reach our editorial department via fax at 212/219-4696 or e-mail us at edit@saveur.com.

CONTENTS



19



27



42

DEPARTMENTS

16

FIRST Meals in southern Thailand lead to all manner of discoveries.

BY JAMES OSELAND

19

SAVEUR FARE A bumper crop of sweet corn pudding; Quito's sizzling street food; farewell to Ernest Gallo; plus Agenda and more.

22

BOOK REVIEWS Barbara Kingsolver eats what she sows; Madhur Jaffrey reviews a Parsi cookbook.

27

KITCHENWISE For a Singapore cooking school owner, two kitchens are better than one.

BY GEORGIA FREEDMAN

30

CELLAR Tuscany's brunello di montalcino reds are at once bold and graceful.

BY PAUL LUKACS

32

SOURCE You don't need a Southern grandma to enjoy flaky country ham biscuits.

BY KATHLEEN BRENNAN

34

REPORTER When you're hiking the full length of the Pacific Crest Trail, eating becomes an odyssey unto itself.

BY DAVID PLOTNIKOFF

38

ESSAY Food shopping can renew our kinship with humankind—and even with the divine.

BY FRANCINE PROSE

42

CLASSIC The madeleine, beloved of Proust and countless others, has a storied past.

BY LILY BINNS

89

IN THE SAVEUR KITCHEN Do-it-your-

self steak sauce; Maggi seasoning; spoonable palm sugar; cube steak; and more.

96

THE PANTRY How to find our favorite products and materials from this issue.

BY LIZ PEARSON

100

SAVEUR MOMENT A cooking conference is more than a flash in the pan.

PHOTOGRAPH BY VINCENT WEST/REUTERS

RECIPES & METHODS

FARE

Corn Pudding.....	21
Bhaji (Parsi-Style Braised Greens).....	24

CLASSIC

Madeleines	42
------------------	----

STEAK

Marinated Flank Steak.....	49
Filets Mignons with Mushroom Sauce.....	50
Thịt Bò Bit-Tết (Vietnamese-Style Steak).....	55
Swiss Steak.....	55
Entrecôtes au Poivre Vert (Strip Steaks with Green Peppercorn Sauce).....	65
Steak House-Style Porterhouse	67

SOUTHERN THAILAND

Tom Yum Goong (Sweet and Sour Prawn Soup)	70
---	----

Yum Pak Groom (Fern Curry with Shrimp)	73
Mee Teow (Stir-Fried Rice Vermicelli with Black Pepper and Chinese Chives)	75
Yum Takrai (Spicy Lemongrass Salad)	77
Kao Mok Gai (Thai-Style Chicken Biryani)	78

FRENCH HOME COOK

Salade aux Poires et Boudin Blanc (Pear and Boudin Salad).....	82
Rouleaux de Concombre et Saumon (Cucumber and Salmon Rolls).....	82
Terrine de Poisson (Salmon and Whiting Terrine).....	85
Terrée de Moules (Grilled Mussels)	86

KITCHEN

Homemade Steak Sauce.....	90
---------------------------	----

FOR AN INDEX OF RECIPES AND METHODS BY CATEGORY, SEE PAGE 94.



There's a
**LONG-WINDED
TRUE STORY**
in every bite of cheese.

100% all natural cheese imported from Ireland.



PRODUCT OF
THE REPUBLIC OF
IRELAND

kerrygold.com/usa

as if you needed another reason to love summer.



Goes anywhere.
Grills anything.
Looks good doing it.

The Weber® Q™ 220.

Visit weber.com/q to learn more.



PORSCHE

**From playing a finely tuned
instrument to driving one.**

Watch Plum TV® for the Porsche Performance Series.
Go to plumtv.com/porsche to view these featured events:
Telluride Jazz Celebration and Nantucket Race Week.

©2007 Porsche Cars North America, Inc.

P. 12



NO. 103

SAVEUR

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

James Oseland

DEPUTY EDITORS

Dana Bowen, David McAninch

MANAGING EDITOR

Lily Binns

ART DIRECTOR

David Weaver

FOOD EDITOR

Todd Coleman

PHOTOGRAPHY EDITOR

Larry Nighswander

WINE EDITOR

Paul Lukacs

EDITOR-AT-LARGE

Sofia Perez

ASSOCIATE ART DIRECTOR

Jaclyn Rymuza

DIRECTOR, SAVEUR KITCHEN

Liz Pearson

TRAVEL AND RESEARCH EDITOR

Kate Fox

ASSISTANT EDITOR

Georgia Freedman

ASSISTANT PHOTOGRAPHY EDITOR

Paul Love

COPY CHIEF

Judith Sonntag

COPY EDITOR

Joel Van Liew

ASSISTANTS

*Yolanda AVECILLA, Ashley Berman, Ruth Waxman
(Kitchen); Carrie Bassel, Katherine Cancila, Sarah
Gabrielle Egron, Janine Passarello, Jennifer Salerno*

CONSULTING EDITORS

*Jeffrey Alford, Lidia Bastianich, Rick Bayless,
Raymond Blanc, Kathleen Brennan, Tom Chino, Sally
Clarke, Darrell Corti, Marion Cunningham, Naomi
Duguid, Christopher Hirsheimer, Madhur Jaffrey, Peggy
Knickerbocker, Jeremy Lee, Stanley Lobel, Sheila Lukins,
Deborah Madison, Bruce Meyers, Judy Rodgers, Chris
Schlesinger, Frank Stitt, Alice Waters, Grace Young*

PRODUCTION MANAGER

Courtney Janka

ADVERTISING DESIGN DIRECTOR

Suzanne Oberholtzer

ADVERTISING ARTISTS

*Sommer Hatfield Coffin, Wendy Crenner, John Digsby,
Shannon Mendis*

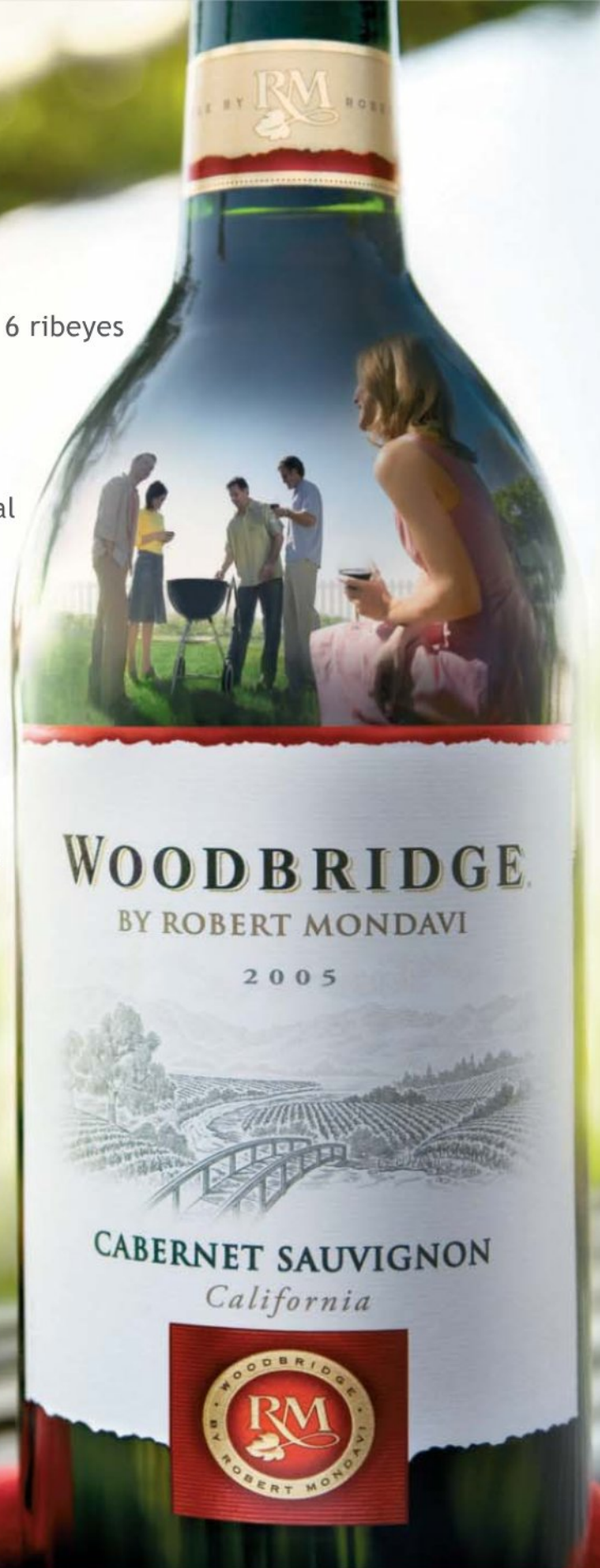
PUBLICATION AGREEMENT NUMBER: 40018707
CANADA RETURN MAIL: P.O. BOX 25542, LONDON ON N6C 6B2
www.saveur.com

6 ribeyes

A bag of hickory charcoal

45 minutes until sunset

1 bottle of



©2007 Woodbridge Winery, Woodbridge, CA

MAKE EVERY DAY A LITTLE LESS EVERYDAY

WOODBRIDGE.
BY ROBERT MONDAVI

We're tasting something extraordinary!

TASTING WITH THE MASTERS SERIES

Brought to you by SAVEUR and Relais & Châteaux



SAVEUR is pleased to announce an extraordinary wine program in partnership with Relais & Châteaux, a collection of the world's finest restaurants and luxury hotels. Taste, learn, and explore today's most exciting wines and flavorful cuisine with nationally acclaimed sommeliers and chefs.

2007 Tasting with the Masters

Little Nell

Aspen, CO
July 15, 2007

Truth in Terroir –
Burgundy, the
Apogee of Pinot Noir
and Chardonnay
Chef Ryan Hardy and
Master Sommelier
Richard Betts

Gary Danko

San Francisco, CA
September 15, 2007

Modern/Classics –
White Burgundy
Interpretations:
2004 versus 2005
Chef Gary Danko and
Sommelier
Jason Alexander

Coming Soon!

Planters Inn in
Charleston, SC
September 29, 2007

Chicago, IL
October

Tickets \$250 per person for each location

VISIT SAVEUR.COM FOR MORE INFORMATION.
TO REGISTER, PLEASE CALL 866/459-9348.

LEARN . TASTE . CELEBRATE.

SAVEUR
SAVEUR.COM



SAVEUR

PUBLISHER

Russell Cherami, 212/219-4636

NEW YORK ADVERTISING SALES

212/219-7400

WINE AND SPIRITS DIRECTOR/NORTHEAST

John Horan, 212/219-7481

LUXURY GOODS DIRECTOR/MIDWEST

Denise Autorino, 212/219-7415

ACCOUNT MANAGER/SOUTHEAST, TEXAS

Rick Johnson, 212/219-7413

SALES MANAGERS

DETROIT: *Focus Media & Marketing*

Ken Stubblefield, 313/670-0553

Rick Pankratz, 248/318-5750

NORTHWEST: *Publicitas San Francisco*

Carolyn Ware, 415/624-2400

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA: *MediaCentric*

Steve Thompson, 415/435-4678

HAWAII: *Ken Leandro, 805/745-7157*

CANADA: *Impact Media Group Inc.*

Allan J. Bedard, 416/679-9600, ext. 224

Harry de Haas, 416/679-9600, ext. 222

CARIBBEAN, FLORIDA, MEXICO: *Trier Media*

Chris Trier, 305/531-2320

DIRECTOR ONLINE/ENDEMIC

Erich Berger, 407/571-4925

THE MARKET

Suzan Erikson (Manager), 407/571-4700

Michelle Goode (Manager), 407/571-4871

saveurmarket@worldpub.net

SALES ASSISTANT

Padmini Multani

MARKETING

Leslie Brecken (Executive Director)

Tanya M. Tarek (Sales Development Manager)

Marcia Caton (Marketing Manager)

Nancy Painter (Marketing Consultant)

MARKETING LIAISON

Donna Kohn Snow

RESEARCH DIRECTOR

Heather M. Idema

GROUP PUBLISHER

Carole-Ann Hayes

BONNIER
CORPORATION

CHAIRMAN

Jonas Bonnier

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Terry Snow

Chief Operating Officer: *Dan Altman*

Treasurer: *Nancy Coalter*

Vice President, Consumer Marketing: *Bruce Miller*

Vice President, Production: *Lisa Earlywine*

Vice President, Corporate Communications: *Dean Turcol*

Senior Director, Human Resources: *Sheri Bass*

Corporate Counsel: *Jeremy Thompson*

Business Director, Consumer Marketing: *Dean Psarakis*

Director, Newsstand Sales: *Vicki Weston*

Director, Subscription Marketing: *Leigh Bingham*

Director, Account Services: *Dinah Peterson*

Director, Network & Computer Operations: *Mike Stea*

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES AT www.worldpub.net



© Lipton 2007 www.liptonpureleaf.com

BECOME A NATURALLY PROTECTED HABITAT. LIPTON TEA CAN DO THAT.



New Lipton PureLeaf™ Tea. Be a thriving species with the power of tea and pure antioxidants. Pure tea taste. Nothing artificial. Protective antioxidants for your flora and fauna.

Lipton PureLeaf™ Tea naturally contains flavanoid antioxidants. Antioxidants help neutralize free radicals, molecules which can damage cells.



FIRST

Heart of the Matter

Food and wine may be our subject, but people tell our stories

THERE WERE 11 OF us—all local people, except for me—at lunch that day in Khuan Khanun, a rice-farming village in southern Thailand. It was fiercely hot, and Daeng Sangsirit, our host and the mother of Arthol, a Thai friend who'd been showing me around the region for an article I was writing and photographing (see "Southern Heat", page 68), thought that we'd be more comfortable on the porch than inside the house.

The food—a striking array of more than 15 dishes prepared by Daeng and other women from the village—was intended to serve as my introduction to southern Thai cooking. Among those dishes were coconut milk-based curries, nam prik (a salsa-like condiment), and braised wild water spinach, which Daeng told me she'd harvested earlier that day from a riverbed just up the road. Each dish was vibrant and fresh and expressed the soul of the woman who'd cooked it.

After we had finished the meal, I brought out a copy of *SAVEUR*; I wanted my dining companions to see where I worked. They gathered around and leafed through the magazine's pages. At first the looks on their faces conveyed confusion—why on Earth, they seemed to be thinking, would anyone need a magazine about food? Isn't eating it satisfying enough? Then Daeng looked up at me and smiled. Her son translated what she said: "Oh, I see. This magazine isn't just about food; it's about people."

Finding editors who recognize basic credos like that is one of the more gratifying aspects of my work, and so I take pleasure in introducing the newest member of our staff, Paul Lukacs, who comes on board this month as wine editor. (His story on brunello di montalcino appears in *Cellar*, on page 30, and on page 54 you can read his expert advice on pairing wine with steak.) Paul's résumé is im-

pressive, to be sure: among other accomplishments to his credit, he is the author of two authoritative books on American wine, one of which—*American Vintage* (Houghton Mifflin, 2000)—was named wine book of the year in 2001 by both the James Beard Foundation and the International Association of Culinary Professionals. But what really struck me dur-



A first taste of *SAVEUR* in Khuan Khanun, in Thailand.

ing our first chat together was his unpretentiousness.

"I think of wine as food," he told me, "not as a status symbol."

I knew at once that Paul was our kind of wine guy. In him I found someone who understands that this ancient drink is not just an accessory to a meal but an integral element of it, as much a gift from the people who make it as those dishes were in southern Thailand that hot afternoon many months ago. —JAMES OSELAND, *Editor-in-Chief*

French Mediterranean Restaurant

EXPERIENCE
PASO ROBLES
WINE COUNTRY

TASTING ROOM
→

TASTE
SENSE
DIVERSITY
MYSTIQUE
INTENSITY
CENTRAL
COAST
CALIFORNIA
TERROIR
HISTORY
PASSION
FUTURE

PASOWINE.COM

CITY OF EL PASO DE ROBLES

Paso Robles 10
Salinas 110
San Francisco 214

distinct. different.
PASO ROBLES
pasowine.com

© 2007 PASO ROBLES WINE COUNTRY ALLIANCE - WWW.PASOWINE.COM



Voted World's Best Cruise Line 11 consecutive years.

Choices. With over 20,000 wines from the finest cellars, choice is just one of the reasons *Travel + Leisure* and *Condé Nast Traveler* readers have voted us World's Best Large-Ship Cruise Line for 11 consecutive years. For more information visit crystalcruises.com. To book, contact your travel agent or call 888-599-0593.

 **CRYSTAL**
CRUISES
The difference is Crystal clear.

A CIVILIZED WAY TO HANDLE YOUR AGGRESSION.



The all-new Acura TL Type-S. The civilized way to handle aggression is to embrace it, with 286 hp and sport suspension, exclusive to the Type-S. While enjoying sophisticated technology like voice-activated navigation and real-time traffic monitoring.* Aggression has been refined. Barely. Visit us at acura.com.



FARE

News and Novelties from the World of Food, plus Book Review, Agenda, and More

AGENDA

JUNE

16

ABSINTHE FESTIVAL

Boveresse, Switzerland

Legal again to sell in Switzerland since 2005, absinthe—a.k.a. “the green fairy”, a nickname given to the wormwood-based, anise-flavored drink for its grassy color and the otherworldly buzz it induces—originated in the country’s verdant Val-de-Travers. The valley town of Boveresse toasts the elixir with a tasting of varieties from local distilleries. The event kicks off with the ceremonial melting of a cube of sugar in the official *cuillère à absinthe* (absinthe spoon). The resulting syrup is added to the first, potent glass of the day. Information: 877/794-8037.



JUNE

16–24

DAYS OF CHERRIES FESTIVAL

Lovran, Croatia

This weeklong harvest festival revels in all things cherry—specifically, the dark red bigarreau cherry, for which this coastal town in northwestern Croatia is famous. Local restaurants offer fresh cherries, cherry cakes, and savory dishes like cherry dumplings and grouper with cherry liqueur consommé. The celebration culminates with the construction of a 33-foot-long cherry strudel, which is brought to Lovran’s main square. While you finish up your piece of the dessert, enjoy traditional music performed by local ensembles. Information: 385 51 291 740.



Ottoman à la Mode

Rare orchids are the key to this creamy Turkish dessert

WHILE TRAVELING in Turkey not long ago, I encountered gelato’s distant cousin maraş dondurması. The dessert, whose name simply means ice cream from Maraş (the southeastern city, also known as Kahramanmaraş, where the sweet

is thought to have been invented), is made from the milk of local goats that graze on wild oregano. The ingredient that really makes it distinctive, though, is salep, a powder derived from the tubers of local varieties of wild orchid. Regarded as an aphrodisiac in ancient times,

salep gives maraş dondurması a delightfully chewy consistency. Though it’s sometimes served in cones, the frozen confection is traditionally eaten with a knife and fork.

Determined to taste the delicacy, I decided to begin a recent trip to Turkey in Maraş; I arrived after a grueling, 24-hour journey from my home in San Francisco and was immediately directed to Yaşar Pastanesi, a pastry shop owned by the Kanbur family, which has been making maraş dondurması for generations. Outside, I watched as one brother used a metal rod to beat and knead the dessert, to achieve the right consistency, and then extract luscious masses of it from the metal container and heap it onto cones for hungry passersby. Inside the shop, a thick rope of maraş dondurması the length of an elephant’s trunk hung from a meat hook; to my amazement, it didn’t melt (salep retains water and thus slows the melting process). Another brother, dressed in a sash and billowing pants, pulled and stretched the ice cream like taffy. Then, with a cleaver, he carved off a wedge for me and placed it in the center of a plate dusted with soft pistachio crumbs. I marveled at the texture—dense and silky—and the mild, subtly sweet flavor. The 24-hour slog? Worth every bite. (See *THE PANTRY*, page 96, for information on visiting the pastry shop.) —*Andrea Blum*

Preparing maraş dondurması at the Yaşar Pastanesi pastry shop.

J U N E

26

Birthday

ROY J. PLUNKETT*New Carlisle, Ohio, 1910*

Roy Plunkett's may not be a household name, but that of his best-known discovery is. Plunkett, a chemist for DuPont, stumbled upon a compound called polytetrafluoroethylene, later trademarked as Teflon, while investigating the properties of freon gas. It was another 16 years before a French chemist discovered the culinary applications of this nonstick, heat-resistant substance. Once he had, omelette making was never the same again.

J U N E

29-30

**PURPLEHULL PEA FESTIVAL AND
WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP
ROTARY TILLER RACE**
Emerson, Arkansas

When the shells of the purple-hull pea, a mild-flavored variety of cowpea, turn a distinctive deep purple, signaling the peas' ripeness, residents of this 359-person town in southern Arkansas know it's time to celebrate this popular legume. Participants compete in a cook-off, a pea shelling contest, and an event unique among motorsport competitions: a rototiller race. Information: 870/547-3500.

J U L Y

1

Anniversary

**THE NATIONWIDE GIRL SCOUT
COOKIE FUND-RAISER IS BORN**
United States, 1922

It's hard to imagine a world without Thin Mints and Do-Si-Dos, but such a bleak place existed before 1922. That's the year when Florence Neill, a Girl Scouts of America local director in Chicago, proposed a large-scale cookie-selling fund-raiser in the July 1922 issue of *The American Girl*, a magazine published by the organization. Scouts baked and packaged their own cookies until 1936, when their success prompted the hiring of professional bakers.



Endless Summer

Born of dog days, buttery corn pudding warms things up all year long

ANTICIPATING the arrival of sweet, tender summer corn, I recently dug out my aunt Judy's old recipe for Washington County corn pudding. That's Washington County, Pennsylvania, not far from where I spent much of my childhood

and where eating good corn was an inalienable right. My aunt was a bit of a pill—you can practically see it in her cramped handwriting—but her corn pudding was as sublime as it was simple: no eggs, no sugar, no flour, and, God be praised, no canned creamed

corn; just pure, fresh summer kernels scraped straight from the cob and baked in a casserole dish with lots of butter until the edges were browned and crisp and the inside was creamy perfection.

Though the recipe is blissfully easy to follow, preparing corn

FARE

FOOD FOR THOUGHT



"How sweet I roam'd from field
to field / And tasted all the sum-
mer's pride."

—WILLIAM BLAKE, "SONG (HOW
SWEET I ROAM'D)", POETICAL
SKETCHES (1783)

pudding in our house was always something of a production because for us it was usually a cold-weather dish, and we had to buy, cut, and freeze enough corn to see us through Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter, and various Sunday dinners, when corn pudding often accompanied roast beef with gravy and brussels sprouts. For me, corn pudding was the highlight of every one of those meals, no matter what else was on the menu.

The daylong process of making the pudding would start on a summer Saturday morning,

when my family would drive to one of the big farm stands on the outskirts of town. We would look for mature ears with deep yellow kernels. Then we'd repair to the old picnic table in our backyard and take our appointed places. The women shucked, the children plucked off the silk, and the men removed the kernels, methodically pushing the ears through scrapers—wooden contraptions with rows of nails, which tore at the raw corn, and a blade that removed it and sent the milky flesh sailing into a bowl.

A little of the corn mush would be set aside for making the season's first batch of corn

pudding, which we'd eat that night with grilled hamburgers. The rest of the mush was divided into portions, frozen, and not brought out again for many months. When cold weather had descended and the occasion called for it, Mom would take some mush out of the freezer, let it thaw a bit, and turn it out into a casserole dish; then she'd top it with plenty of butter and put it into the oven. It would emerge a deep golden yellow and with a lovely browned crust—a rich, comforting reminder of summer. (See *THE PANTRY*, page 96, for a source for a corn cutter.)

—Barbara Elizabeth Stewart

METHOD

Corn Pudding

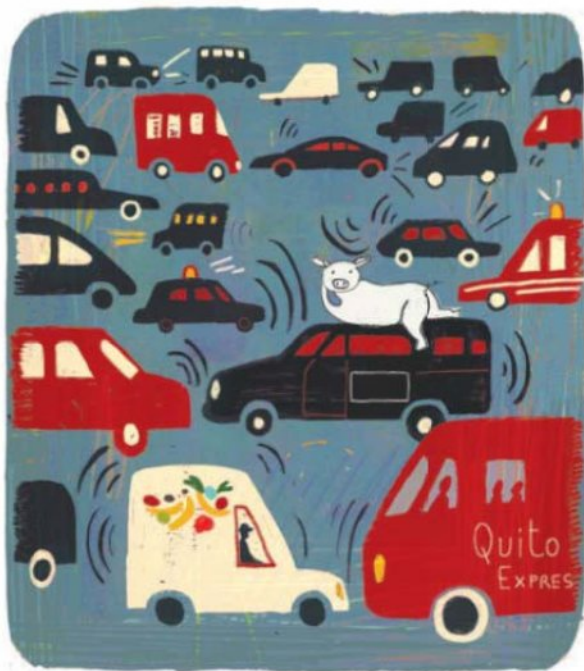
This dish, an adaptation of the one the author's aunt Judy used to cook, is at its best when made with extra-sweet corn. "It's crucial," Stewart says, "that the kernels be smashed and not simply cut, to make the corn mush creamy." Heat oven to 400°. Remove and discard the husks and silk from 12 ears of mature yellow corn. Set one end of a corn cutter (see page 96) into a large bowl and scrape each ear against its blade two or three times on all sides to remove all the kernels, working as close to the cob as possible. (Alternatively, use a knife to scrape the kernels from the cob.) Add salt to taste to the corn and stir to combine. Transfer the corn mixture to an 8" x 8" casserole dish and dot with 6 tbsp. butter cut into small pieces. Bake until pudding is bubbly and the top is golden brown, 40–45 minutes. Serves 4.

GOODBYE, GALLO

Ernest Gallo, who died this spring at the age of 97, was a salesman, not a winemaker. For nearly 60 years, he sold the wines his brother, Julio, made—wines that Ernest presciently sensed Americans wanted. In the process, E & J Gallo became the largest wine company in the U.S. The brothers started their



enterprise in 1933, after the tragic murder-suicide of their parents, and their drive to succeed reflected a deep desire to fix something that had gone terribly wrong. "I never considered for a moment the thought of giving up," Ernest wrote in a 1994 autobiography. "I was determined to make good." To do so, he relied on his uncanny ability to introduce new products precisely when market demand for them was developing. The most famous example was Thunderbird, a white port flavored with citrus juice, for which Ernest got the idea when one of his salesmen reported his seeing shoppers in LA buying white port and flavoring it with lemon juice. Other Gallo products, like Paisano, Ripple, Boone's Farm, and Hearty Burgundy, became top sellers as well. Julio died in 1993, a decade after the company had moved seriously into the varietal-wine market, but Ernest kept working. For him, success did not mean labeling wines with faux French monikers or adopting a so-called wine-country lifestyle. Instead, it meant working hard and earning respect. Wine snobs sometimes belittled his efforts, but proof that he achieved his goal can be found in the fact that the best wines he sold until the day he died carried his family name. —Paul Lukacs



QUITO'S STREET-FOOD STAR

Whenever I travel to Quito, Ecuador, where I used to live, I make a beeline for the bustling La Floresta traffic circle, which, after five in the afternoon, becomes a sort of carnivore's paradise. There, among dozens of vendors, you'll find one of the superstars of Ecuadorian street food: tripa mishqui (grilled beef or pork intestines). Beautifully charred and redolent of the cumin, garlic, and spices in which it was marinated, tripa mishqui is not, as you might expect, tripe (which is technically cow's, pig's, or sheep's stomach) but rather a distant relative of chitterlings. The tripa mishqui found at La Floresta, usually served over potatoes and salsa or white hominy and toasted corn, is smoky, sweet, and creamy, with a chewy, satisfying texture that can be daunting for first-timers but is, for fans like me, the very essence of the dish. (The word *mishqi* in the Quechua language literally translates as Indian gum.) Folk wisdom has it that tripa mishqui is a cure for stomach ailments; I think it's just good eating. —Anastacia Marx de Salcedo

FARE

JULY

8

WORLD'S LARGEST KETCHUP BOTTLE BIRTHDAY PARTY

Collinsville, Illinois

An unusual structure looms above Highway 159 in this town in southwestern Illinois: a 170-foot-tall water tower disguised as a gigantic bottle of ketchup. Erected in 1949 for the Collinsville-based G. S. Suppiger ketchup bottling company, the marvel was saved from demolition in the 1990s by preservationists. Now the town throws a birthday party for it each July, complete with food, games, a blind ketchup tasting, and even a car show. Information: 618/344-8775.



JULY

11-16

MALATYA INTERNATIONAL ARTS AND APRICOT FESTIVAL

Malatya, Turkey

The apricot is a cornerstone of Turkish cooking, and more than half of those produced in Turkey come from this southeastern city, where they're sold both fresh and sun-dried. The city's population more than doubles during this 14-year-old annual fair as people stream in from surrounding areas to stock up on apricot kebabs and apricot sorbets. Information: 212/687-2194.

JULY

20-22

THE YARMOUTH CLAM FESTIVAL

Yarmouth, Maine

This 42-year-old festival offers three full days of clammy attractions. Thousands of steamers will be served—whole, batter-fried, steamed, and simmered in chowder—over the course of the weekend. The entertainment includes a musical group called The Clams. Information: 207/846-3984.

BOOK REVIEWS

Up from the Roots

A novelist gets back to the land, and a new book explores Parsi cooking

Animal, Vegetable, Miracle: A Year of Food Life | By **Barbara Kingsolver** (HarperCollins, \$26.95) | The novelist Barbara Kingsolver, whose latest book is a memoir-cum-treatise that documents a year during which she and her family grew almost all their own food or purchased it from farms nearby, is not the first writer to note that Americans tend to approach eating more as distracted consumers than as participants in a natural process. Indeed, *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle* joins a growing canon of food-based personal chronicles and social critiques, and it will inevitably inspire comparisons with Michael Pollan's *The Omnivore's Dilemma* (Penguin Press, 2006), which chronicles that writer's own DIY culinary journey.

Much of Kingsolver's tale does cover old ground, but she nonetheless manages to find something new in the terrain. Her compelling account of eating and cooking food fresh from the land—including growing her own vegetables and breeding and slaughtering her own heritage turkeys—serves as a narrative architecture on which she's able to build a convincing argument in favor of cooking from scratch. Making meals in one's own kitchen using quality ingredients, Kingsolver asserts, is an antidote to what she calls our "pathological food culture," which teaches Americans that having wholesome, home-cooked dishes, rather than being a daily necessity, is an occasional indulgence or, worse, a mysterious and unattainable goal. Our everyday food culture, she says, encourages people to reach for processed, heat-and-serve meals because, even though they're aware that tastier, fresher, more healthful alternatives are available, they believe that such foods are hopelessly out of reach, in terms of either cost or effort. She believes that these impulses, added to the fact that most people don't know or care where their food comes from, have far-reaching health consequences.

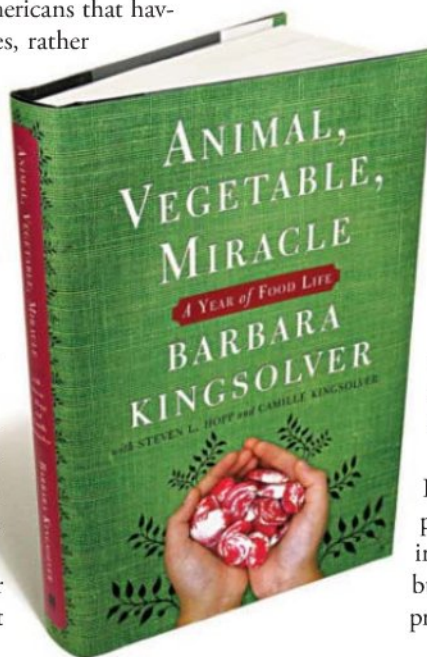
It's her stand against the former of those two ideas—the notion that

cooking with fresh ingredients is widely considered a luxury embraced only by those with ample means and free time—that sets *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle* apart from other books of its ilk. "Cooking," Kingsolver writes, "is a dying art in our culture"; it's a lament that could easily give way to snobbery and to disdain for all those benighted souls who won't go near their stoves. But instead of falling into that trap, Kingsolver channels the persona of a nurturing teacher: the hardest part, she writes, "is just turning on the burner and giving it a shot." Approaching mealtimes as a creative opportunity, rather than a chore, is an option.... [T]he first step is likely the hardest: convincing oneself it's worth the trouble....

To help skeptics along, Kingsolver includes menus of simple, unpretentious seasonal recipes—a basil-blackberry crumble for June, for example, and a spicy turkey sausage in September—compiled over the course of her *annus mirabilis* by her 19-year-old daughter, Camille, a budding cook and nutritionist. In these recipes and in the narrative itself, Kingsolver is noticeably at pains to strike a tone of gentle encouragement without sounding preachy. But given that urging people to change their everyday behavior

is by definition a form of proselytizing, the author's advice sometimes comes off awkwardly. Her suggestion to replace the parlance "slaving over a hot stove" with the phrase "cooking without remuneration", for example, seems unlikely to catch on. Similarly, her curious decision to counsel women but not men to return to the kitchen makes it easy to dismiss her as being out of touch.

And that's a shame, because Kingsolver is making a crucial point: that preparing and cooking your own food instead of buying it premade isn't just the prerogative of a socially conscious





What is it about owning a Weber® grill that can make you wear your heart on your sleeve?

Everything. From the thoughtful design to the careful construction to the way it treats your \$40 filets, it all adds up to an ownership experience as beautiful as the grill itself. That's why millions of people around the world love their Weber® grills.

To learn more, visit weber.com or text HAPPY to 35350 and see just how satisfying your relationship with your grill can be.



FARE

upper-middle class but rather a universally enjoyable, affordable, and essential component of a balanced life. —*Tracie McMillan*

My Bombay Kitchen: Traditional and Modern Parsi Home Cooking | By Niloufer Ichaporia King (University of California Press, \$27.50) |

Niloufer Ichaporia King's *My Bombay Kitchen* answers a longstanding need in this country for documentation of the foodways of the Parsis, one of India's many ethnic groups. This book, written with knowing wit by an author of Parsi origin and backed by a wealth of scholarship, may be the definitive volume on this great cuisine.

India's Parsis are descended from Zoroastrian Persians who fled from Islamic persecution to India in the tenth century. They settled on India's western coast, in what is now the state of Gujarat, where they were allowed to practice their own faith in return for adopting local customs and language. In the 18th and 19th centuries, as Bombay (now called Mumbai) changed under British colonial rule from a collection of fishing islands into one of India's principal cities, the Parsis thrived. Already well established socioeconomically, they now found jobs working for the British or ran businesses that catered to both non-English-speaking Indians and the colonial masters. And yet, their cooking retained its deep roots in the Persian and Gujarati cultures.

King explains that some Parsi dishes—such as chicken with apricots, a sweet, salty, and spicy mélange of deliciously contrasting flavors—retained a few half-remembered aspects of Persia. The *khattu-mitthu* (sweet and sour) version of keema, or ground meat, that the author describes is another such dish.

Gujarati seasonings and techniques, not surprisingly, heavily infiltrated Parsi cooking and added a new, exciting dimension to the food. The ever popular *patra ni machhi*,

for example—steamed pieces of fish in green chutney—probably owes a debt to the Muslims of Gujarat, who cook many meat dishes in green chutney sauces. Some of the dishes in *My Bombay Kitchen* are inflected with flavors from India at large; the excellent recipe for bhaji (braised greens), for example, seems to have been influenced by flavors and methods common across North India.

The British also left their mark; witness King's Irish stew—slow-cooked lamb (or veal or chicken) enlivened with ginger-gar-



lic paste and green chile. *My Bombay Kitchen* makes abundantly clear that Parsi cuisine is a very special composite that hasn't stopped evolving and absorbing influences from abroad, as attested to by the recipe for "Mother's 'Italian' Eggs": deviled eggs with mayonnaise, lime, chiles, and cilantro—a variation on an old Parsi dish that King says is "as Italian as the French dressing you buy in supermarkets is French".

King writes in a style that manages to charm even as her recipes sternly order the reader about. Listen to her on the subject of making creamy paneer, a fresh Indian cheese:

"When the milk comes to a boil, let it come all the way to the top of the pan. Lift the pan off the burner while the milk subsides. Do this four more times. Don't ask why. Just do it."

The instructions had me laughing out loud even as I dutifully followed them, as did the other memorable commentaries

and insights that pepper the text: "Anything with a cheese flavor attracts Parsis like ants to sugar", for example, or "Without the right amount of salt, spices float around, in search of a leader", or "If I had to draw a Parsi food pyramid, it would rise out of a plinth of potato chips". *My Bombay Kitchen* exudes this kind of lighthearted, breezy confidence from beginning to end without sacrificing its central mission of teaching readers how easy and satisfying it is to bring the genius of Parsi cuisine into their homes. —*Madhur Jaffrey*

RECIPE

Bhaji

(Parsi-Style Braised Greens)

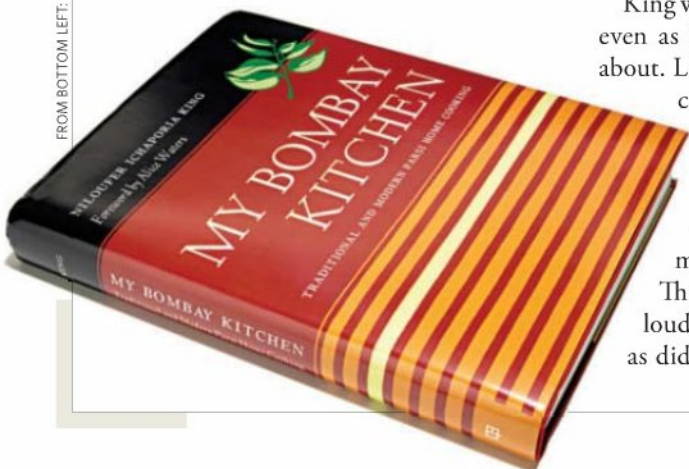
SERVES 4

This recipe is based on one that appears in *My Bombay Kitchen* by Niloufer Ichaporia King (University of California Press, 2007). "Try this way of cooking greens with whatever's in season," says the author. "Parsis usually go for amaranth, spinach, or fenugreek greens."

- 1 1/4" piece peeled fresh ginger, chopped
- 1 clove garlic, chopped
- Salt
- 2 1/2 lbs. greens, such as spinach or amaranth, trimmed and washed
- 1 tbsp. canola oil
- 1-2 green thai chiles, slit to the stem
- 1 small red onion, chopped
- 1/4 tsp. turmeric
- 1/2 tsp. cayenne
- 1 tomato, cored and coarsely chopped

1. Put ginger and garlic together on a cutting board, sprinkle with a bit of salt, and roughly chop them together. Using the flat side of your knife blade, smash the chopped ginger and garlic to form a paste; set aside. Put spinach into a large pot, cover, and with no more than the water adhering to the leaves, steam over medium heat, tossing occasionally, until the greens collapse, 5-7 minutes; drain and set aside.

2. Heat oil in a skillet over medium heat. Add the green chiles and let them sizzle for a moment before adding the onion. When the onion softens, add the ginger-garlic paste, stirring to keep the contents from sticking. Add the turmeric, cayenne, and about 1/2 tsp. salt and stir for a few moments before you add the chopped tomato. Let the tomato cook down a little, 3-4 minutes. Add greens, combine well, and cook over low heat, covered, until tender and well flavored with the other ingredients, about 30 minutes. The final consistency should be "fairly dry, not swimming".



ALMONDSAREIN.COM

SINFULLY
GOOD WINE
FOR YOUR
VIRTUOUS
SIDE.



ST. SUPÉRY
VIRTÚ

NAPA VALLEY

*Meritage: rare and wonderful, the
best Sauvignon Blanc - Semillon
blend of the vintage*



*Like the blend, the label's illustration
changes with each vintage*

St. Supéry Vineyards & Winery, Rutherford
Napa Valley, California • www.stsupery.com

KITCHENWISE



West Meets East

In a Singapore home, two culinary traditions come together under one roof

BY GEORGIA FREEDMAN PHOTOGRAPHS BY RORY DANIEL

WHEN KWAN LUI and her husband, Leon, were planning their dream house in Singapore's Bukit Timah neighborhood ten years ago, Lui, the founder and director of At-Sunrice, a cooking school, knew she wanted a kitchen design that could accommodate the breadth of her culinary interests. Influenced by her years of traveling in Europe and the United States but still loyal to the Asian cooking methods she grew up with, Lui arrived at a simple solution:

build two kitchens, one that caters to the cooking and entertaining styles of the West (above, left, with Lui at the counter) and the other inspired by the techniques of the East (right, with Lorna Tuliao, a member of Lui's household staff).

"I liked the Western custom of family members' congregating in the kitchen," Lui says. At the same time, she wanted a comfortable space that would serve as a self-contained workshop where she could

KITCHENWISE



1



2



3



4

focus on the cuisines of Myanmar (where she was born), Malaysia, and other Asian countries, which inspire many of her meals.

In the end, the two kitchens were built next to each other, separated by a corridor, with the Asian-style kitchen—where the more intense, and intensely aromatic, cooking usually takes place—far from the house's living areas. "I generally like to make everything from scratch instead of buying ready-made ingredients in jars," she says. "And prepping and cooking Asian foods, like toasting shrimp paste over charcoal or pounding the seasoning ingredients for *kyet-thar hin* [a Myanmar-style chicken curry], can be quite fragrant!"

The utilitarian, Asian-style kitchen, with its large gas stove, two portable ranges (designed to allow the bottom of woks to sit closer to the flame), a full-size refrigerator, and spacious tile countertops, is where Lui does most of her cooking. A walk-in pantry around the corner contains a treasure trove of foodstuffs carted back from her travels and cooking vessels designed for specific purposes, like a double boiler used specifically for making a flavorful Cantonese-style chicken consommé known as *kai jing*, "essence of chicken". A sliding glass door at the far end of the space floods the cooking area with natural light and leads into a lush garden, where Lui grows her own herbs, spices, and fruit.

A large service window at the opposite end of the room connects the Asian kitchen to the Western one. The latter space, contiguous with the dining room, has two sinks, two wall-mounted ovens, plenty of cabinets, and two refrigerators: one for ingredients and another exclusively for wine. "It is a very functional room," she says of the Western kitchen, where she often entertains. "Guests can graze at the bar, and the center island can hold appetizers or a buffet spread."

Like the adjacent dining room, the Western-style kitchen is completely open to the outdoors, thanks to a retractable glass wall, which Lui keeps open, weather permitting. When she's entertaining, guests meander around a series of patios along the sides of the house. "If we have a dinner party with a lot of people," Lui says, "the entire patio becomes an extension of the kitchen." For smaller parties, she likes to serve main courses in the dining room and offer dessert and fruit on the patio. "That way we can move the guests around, like musical chairs," she says. Lui frequently cooks outdoors, both on her Western-style charcoal grill and in her Japanese barbecue pot and smoker.

When Lui is not having friends or students over, she and her husband like to go out to the patio's reflecting pond and sit on a swing she had converted from an Indian brass chain lamp that's typical of the kind that hangs in Hindu temples. "After dinner Leon and I just sit there, looking into the pond," she says. "The reflection is very clear and brings some calm to our busy lives." (For more information about At-Sunrice, the Singapore Culinary Academy & Spice Garden, see *THE PANTRY*, page 96.)

Would you like to share your own kitchen design ideas with other *SAVEUR* readers?

Send us photos of your kitchen, both overall and in detail, along with your name, address, and a few lines telling us what's special about it. Please note that unused submissions cannot be acknowledged or returned. Our address: Kitchenwise, *SAVEUR*, 304 Park Avenue South, 8th Floor, New York, NY 10010.



Noodling Around (above)

Lui uses this brass pot—called a *takrang* in Thailand—for making rice flour noodles. The receptacle is filled with a mixture of rice flour and water, and the plunger-like tool pushes the paste through holes in the pot's base directly into boiling water.

1. Garden Variety Lui grows her own peppercorns, blue ginger, lemongrass, and other herbs and spices in her garden. Acidic belimbing (shown), a relative of star fruit, is used as a souring agent in many Chinese-Malay dishes and curries.

2. Morning Cuppa On most days Lui prepares a breakfast drink of her own invention: a purée of soaked, ground soybeans, black beans, almonds, and apricot kernels, flavored with ginger and pandan leaf. Making it is a little more complicated than dunking a tea bag, but she swears by its energy-giving properties.

3. Room with a View A wide entryway makes it easy for people in the two kitchens to talk with one another. Lui sometimes cooks in the Asian-style kitchen and plates dishes in the Western-style one.

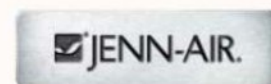
4. Ancient Inspiration In keeping with a Southeast Asian tradition, Lui's house is surrounded by a garden. The Western kitchen's sliding glass walls admit sunshine, fresh air, the sounds of chirping birds, and the fragrance of tropical blossoms, inviting nature to become an element of her home.



FOR THE LOVE OF COOKING.™



Have you ever risen with the sun to express your devotion? Create a kitchen that's worthy of your passion. For more information, call 1-800-Jenn-Air or visit www.jennair.com.



CELLAR

Beautiful Brawn

Tuscany's brunellos present a pleasing paradox

BY PAUL LUKACS

BRUNELLO di montalcino, one of Tuscany's most revered reds, tastes at once robust and refined, elemental and elegant. Brawny in its youth, it opens slowly to reveal surprising grace and charm, like a football player who can dazzle on the dance floor as well as the gridiron. That beguiling combination gives it a singular appeal.

Though brunello's deep flavors and tight tannins may seem old-fashioned, it is in many respects a modern creation. Back in the 1970s and 1980s, innovative vintners in Tuscany pioneered alternatives to that era's ubiquitous thin, tart chiantis. Many planted international grapes like cabernet and merlot, producing wines that became dubbed super-Tuscans. These tasted flamboyant though derivative. At the same time, other visionary winemakers set up shop in Montalcino. Inspired less by foreign wines than by the possibility that this relatively remote region south of Siena might produce something inimitable, they used only brunello, an indigenous clone of sangiovese.

One Montalcino company, Biondi-Santi, had developed this wine years earlier, though it released only four vintages in nearly six decades. The new vintners also made full-bodied, 100 percent sangiovese wines, and many took advantage of modern techniques to do so more consistently. Improved grape selection, along with temperature-controlled fermentations and better cask manage-

ment, helped them to craft many more wines that tasted unique to Montalcino. Today, more than 250 producers are in operation, and brunello has become one of Italy's most prized wines.

At their best, brunellos taste deliciously distinctive. They seem unyieldingly tannic when young, even though regulations require that they not be released until four years after harvest (five with *riserva*). But seven to ten years past the vintage, they soften to reveal a wealth of aromas and flavors. They taste something like dark cherries, but up-front fruit doesn't constitute even half their charm. Nuanced notes resembling tobacco, tea, leather, and dried herbs form a complementary mélange that no other red wine quite delivers. A mature brunello di montalcino gives nary a nod to wines made elsewhere, which is why it may well be the most super Tuscan of all. *—P.L.*



Tasting Notes

Here are 11 top brunellos. All hail from 2001, one of the best vintages in recent years and the one now for sale in most wine shops. See *THE PANTRY*, page 96, for sources.

ALTESINO (\$35). Though I've heard reports of bottle variation with this wine, the one I sampled in Montalcino last December was in fine shape. Marked by dark cherry fruit and a cocoa-tinged bouquet, it had initially tight tannins but a supple finish, promising superior development.

BIONDI-SANTI TENUTA GREPPO (\$175). Biondi-Santi makes firm, dry wines. The 2001 is typically austere and clearly demands cellaring. I've been lucky to have tasted a couple of delicious older vintages in the past, and this one might well turn out as successfully. Still, \$175 is a lot to spend on a gamble.

CASTEL GIOCONDO (\$55). Castel Giocondo is made in an international—or fruit-forward and oak-influenced—style. Yet unlike other similarly designed brunellos, the wine retains its Montalcino character.

CASTELLO BANFI POGGIO ALLE MURA (\$81). No one has done more to raise the quality and profile of Montalcino wines than this estate's American owners, the Mariani family. This particular single-vineyard offering tastes and smells ethereal, with an extraordinarily complex array of aromas and flavors. It's scheduled for release in the United States this fall.

DONATELLA CINELLI COLOMBINI (\$60). Donatella Cinelli Colombini produces powerful, meaty brunellos. The 2001 offers plenty of muscle but also enticing notes reminiscent of leather and sweet spice.

FULIGNI RISERVA (\$144). Concentrated yet stylish, this wine has flavors that become ever more expansive with time in the glass. Along with the tight tannins, that evolution suggests excellent aging potential. Save it for a special occasion five or ten years from now. You won't be disappointed.

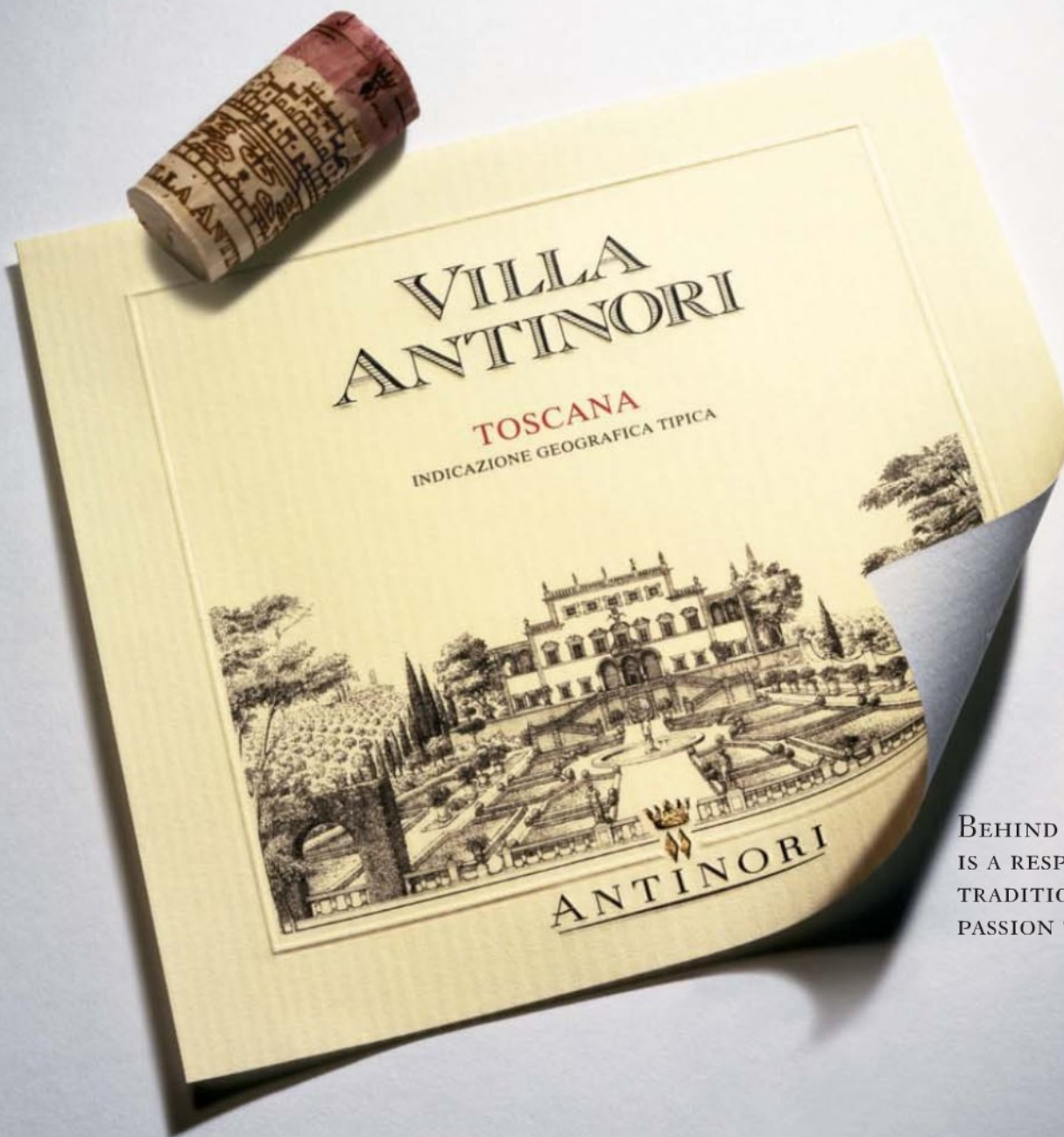
LISINI (\$69). Exceptionally classy, with sweet, cherry-scented fruit enhanced by delicate secondary flavors that unfold gracefully and linger long. Well structured, it nonetheless has softer tannins than many 2001 brunellos and thus can be enjoyed sooner.

IL MARRONETO "MADONNA DELLA GRAZIE" (\$90). This single-vineyard brunello displays an alluring bouquet followed by sumptuous, layered flavors. Well-balanced, it will benefit from a few years of cellaring but should offer many years of pleasure.

LA PODERINA (\$72). Dark fruit encased by earthy, smoky flavors make this wine compelling. Muscular but surprisingly accessible, it may be drunk (especially if decanted) before many other brunellos.

IL POGGIONE (\$65). A classic bouquet reminiscent of leather, tobacco, and licorice introduces a dark, deep wine with plenty of sweet, cherry-flavored fruit. The tannins prove formidable, so the bottles should age a minimum of five years before being opened.

TENUTE SILVIO NARDI MANACHIARA (\$85). Nardi's 2001 brunello *normale* is certainly impressive, and this single-vineyard offering is spectacular. It offers plenty of dark fruit flavor, but its real charm comes from the myriad of other aromas and flavors that combine to form a seductive whole. —P.L.



BEHIND EACH LABEL
IS A RESPECT FOR
TRADITION AND A
PASSION TO BREAK IT.

SOURCE

Lowcountry Love

These biscuits are full of Southern goodness

BY KATHLEEN BRENNAN

BUTTERMILK BISCUITS ARE standard on Southern tables, but not all of them are created equal. “You have to taste a bad biscuit to appreciate a really good one,” says Callie White, the co-owner of Callie’s Charleston Biscuits. When the South Carolina native began offering her ethereally light and soft-textured versions through her catering company in 1991, they quickly became the toast of the Lowcountry, as South Carolina’s southern coastal counties are called. The most popular variation was stuffed with a thin slice of salty country ham; the combination has long been popular in the South. White ultimately adopted a twist on the tradition, mincing the ham so that the biscuits would be easier to bite into and dressing it with a sophisticated-tasting dijon mustard–spiked butter. She also added cream cheese to the biscuit dough for extra richness and flavor.

For years, clients begged White to sell her biscuits on the side, but she was too busy to oblige. Then, in 2004, White’s daughter, Carrie Bailey-Morey, a former investment adviser, saw that her mother needed a break from catering and suggested they go into the biscuit business together. After a little persuading, White agreed, and in 2005 Callie’s was born. Within a year or so, the company, which was originally based in Bailey-Morey’s home, moved into a 1,400-square-foot facility, and White was making up to 15,000 biscuits a month with the help of a handful of friends she hired as bakers. In addition to the country ham variety, Callie’s offers classic buttermilk biscuits (that is, unstuffed), as well as a version whose dough has been flavored with cheddar cheese and minced chives and another generously filled with cinnamon butter. All are prepared by hand. “When you use machinery, you lose some of the fluff and heft—and even some of the goodness,” says White.

Callie’s biscuits are shipped already baked and frozen; you can either heat them right away or put them into the freezer, where they’ll keep for months—though we can’t imagine why anyone would wait that long. A dozen plain biscuits costs \$12.95, plus shipping; \$19.95 gets you 12 of the country ham–stuffed version. To order, call 843/577-1198 or visit www.calliesbiscuits.com.





YOU USED TO THINK
TIME WAS MONEY.
NOW, MONEY IS TIME.

Spending both wisely MADE POSSIBLE WITH WACHOVIA

A shift in perspective comes after successfully managing both wealth and life. Wachovia Wealth Management works closely with your attorney, CPA and other advisors to actively assist you with your financial future. Combining our expertise with theirs to create opportunities for you and your family. As your trusted advocate, we'll help you realize your personal definition of success.

To talk with us, please call 888-283-9633.

INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT

FINANCIAL PLANNING

BANKING AND CREDIT

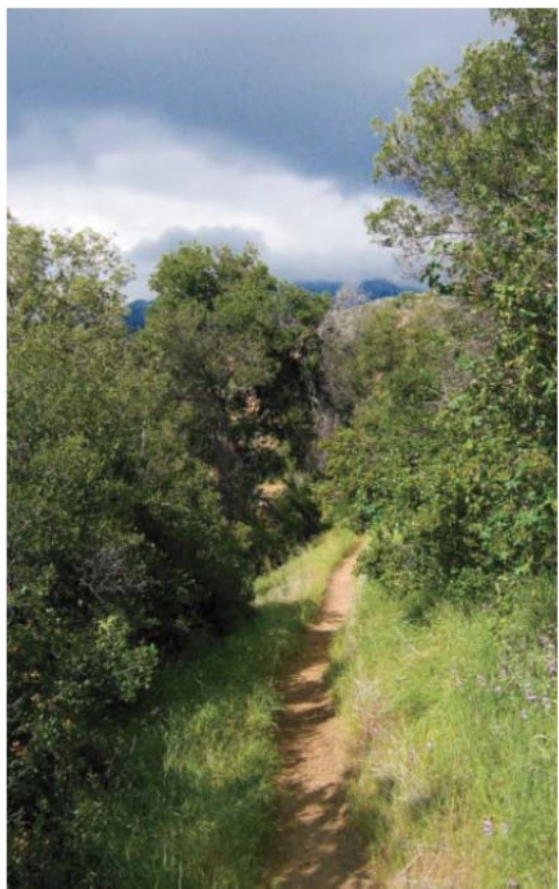
TRUST SERVICES

INSURANCE



WACHOVIA
WEALTH MANAGEMENT

The Massachusetts office of Wachovia Wealth Management is part of Calibre Advisory Services, Inc., a Registered Investment Advisor and a subsidiary of Wachovia Bank, N.A. Employees of this office are not employees of Wachovia Bank, N.A. For clients of the Massachusetts office, Personal Trust, Philanthropic Services and Banking and Credit Services will be provided by employees of Wachovia Bank, N.A., through offices located outside the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. © 2007 Wachovia Corporation



REPORTER

Hungry Man

Hiking along the Pacific Crest Trail is an exercise in transcendent privation

BY DAVID PLOTNIKOFF

IN THE SPRING OF 2004, I was 40 years old, with a wife, a one-year-old child, a mortgage, and a newspaper career that was going nowhere fast. I was haunted by the suspicion that my past 18 years as a cubicle dweller in Silicon Valley had amounted to nothing of lasting value. It was time to separate the essential from the trivial, and there was no better way to do that, I figured, than by embarking on a hiking pilgrimage through the great natural cathedrals of the American West. The route of this odyssey, which I undertook over the three following summers, was the 2,650-mile Pacific Crest Trail, one of America's epic hikes. The way I saw it, if I walked 20 miles a day, every day, through the remotest regions of the Mojave Desert, the High Sierra, and the Cascades, by the time I reached Canada I would have an uncluttered mind and feet as tough as an ancient oak.

As with other great devotional treks, this one was not without its ritual abasements, but I found out that the real ascetic discipline, the very pinnacle of privation, is in the realm of food. I had to learn how to look at meals dispassionately, as a pure calories-in/miles-out equation, but, paradoxically, never in my life have I felt a deeper emotional attachment to what I ate. Every huckleberry on the trail, every steak in town, was a blessing. Food, as it turned out, became the touchstone of my journey.

LIKE MOST OF THE HIKERS who try to walk all or part of the way to Canada along the PCT in any given year, I started at the Mexican border—in Campo, California, southeast of San Diego—around the end of April, hoping to get through the desert section of the trail before many of the creeks and streams (crucial sources of drinking water along the trail) dried up. And so, on a not too oppressively hot Saturday five days into the first segment of my journey, I wasn't surprised to find about two dozen other hikers standing outside the trailer that houses the post office for Warner Springs, a resort town 110 miles north of the trailhead and the first major reprovisioning stop for PCT thru-hikers. These hikers, who were

methodically stripping the town's gas station mini-mart of every last Slim Jim and sour ball, would be with me on and off for the next several hundred miles.

I retrieved my food resupply package, which I'd mailed from home a couple of weeks earlier. Then I found a quiet picnic table outside and took stock of what was supposed to get me to my next major stop, in Idyllwild, California, four days north. Much of it was dehydrated matter that could be roughly classified as things that might have been food in a previous incarnation: freeze-dried backpacking entrées, energy bars, beef jerky, dried fruit. Although I'd been taking in 2,000 calories a day on the trail and burning twice that much, I suddenly felt curiously unhungry.

While most of my fellow hikers opted to take to the trail that afternoon, I decided to stay the night at Warner Springs. The local golf course grill's \$8 burgers with spicy fries were a God-sent gift of grease and salt. So, this is how it has to be all the way to Canada, I thought: five days of calculated starvation followed by a one-day binge. If the burgers held up, I could live with that.

Twenty-one days after I left the border, I descended through a treeless moonscape to Cajon Pass, where the Mojave meets the farthest edge of the Los Angeles Basin, 63 miles from downtown LA. There, the trail crosses under six roaring lanes of Interstate 15, and an abandoned frontage road leads to a McDonald's, the only near-trail franchise fast food between Mexico and Canada. My first foray under the golden arches in well over 20 years included three Quarter Pounder Meals, approximately 4,300 calories in all. As the postprandial coma set in, I glanced around the table at the three other thru-hikers engaged in similar acts of self-abuse. There was shame.

People will tell you that the desert has an ineffable beauty. I found beauty in the details, especially at mealtime, when my hunger was the greatest. Almost every evening, I had my self-contained world, each item perfectly arranged under my tarp. One night I set up camp right alongside the Los Angeles Aqueduct, a paved-over pipeline that runs arrow

Facing page, clockwise from top left: a section of the Pacific Crest Trail; sorting a resupply package; a hiker browses the offerings at a mini-mart; a rare treat of fresh fruit and oatmeal.

San Francisco journalist DAVID PLOTNIKOFF's guide to food and lodging on the Pacific Crest Trail can be found at www.emeraldlake.com/pctguide.



www.saveur.com

EXPANDED
and UPDATED!

Blogs by SAVEUR
Editors

Member Forums

Your Favorite
SAVEUR Recipes

SURE. EXPLORE. ENJOY

What's Cooking at Central Park SummerStage?

City Parks Foundation's free outdoor festival is turning up the heat this summer with a lineup of New York's top chefs preparing local and global cuisines.

June 15 - July 15, 2007
www.SummerStage.org



REPORTER

straight through a dishwater gray valley that's loved—judging from the dirt-bike tracks and ramshackle trailers visible from the trail—only by desert rats and motocross racers. In spite of the 40-mile-an-hour wind, I stuck to my dinner ritual, boiling two cups of water on a homemade stove fashioned from a cat-food can. The wind sent a spectacular corona of blue flame shooting six inches out of the sides of the stove. At any moment, it might have become a rolling fireball skittering across the desert floor. I was alarmed but unbowed. The Mountain House freeze-dried beef stew was worth any risk. To call it processed, powdered food would not do it justice. No, this was a *hyper*-processed medley of carrots, potatoes, and tiny bits of beef, all mechanically diced into uniform six-millimeter cubes and bound together by a dull brown, gelatinous mass that could probably be used in paving work. With a liberal splash of Panola hot sauce, it was exquisitely good.

EIGHT DAYS BEFORE the end of that season's segment, a few miles north of Walker Pass (about 90 miles from Bakersfield, California), I came upon a couple of other thru-hikers, who inquired whether I had noticed the freshly killed deer back at the highway crossing. What followed was an absurd but entirely earnest discussion about the pros and cons of eating roadkill. How fresh was it, really? Did any of us have an implement large enough for butchering a deer? (No.) How much potential hiking time would be consumed in the preparation of seared medallions of venison with a demiglace of Clif Shot Razz Sorbet Energy Gel? (Too much.) The motion was tabled.

Roadkill notwithstanding, food was always a primary motivator for moving me up the trail. One particularly painful section of the PCT encompasses the Hat Creek Rim, a 30-mile, waterless stretch of grassland in Northern California. The slog across it left me plenty of time for reverie. Mostly, I daydreamed about what I would find in Mount Shasta City, the next major town along the trail: the porterhouse steak at the Piemont, an old-school Italian dinner house; the braised lamb shanks at Casa Ramos, a gringo-style Mexican restaurant. I laid out an elaborate plan to pack five full meals into a single day in town; I fell short of my goal, but not by much.

During a good part of the final leg of the journey—which began in July 2006 in Wil-

lamette Pass, in central Oregon, and ended two months later at the Canadian border—I found myself lapsing into a peripatetic form of meditation. Some evenings I would set up camp next to the trail, look at my maps, and realize I'd walked nearly 30 miles. I would routinely go two or three days in the backcountry without speaking to anyone.

By the time I rolled into Cascade Locks, Oregon, a hard-bitten settlement just across the Columbia River from Washington, I was happy to encounter three compatriots, whom I'd seen on and off on the trail for weeks, holed up in a little motel overlooking the river. Scott Williamson, a PCT legend who has twice walked from Mexico to Canada *and back* and who could be called the Michael Jordan of our little world, was there as well, taking a rare day off. Together we toasted the beginning of the end. Tomorrow or the next day we'd cross the high steel bridge that spans the Columbia and enter Washington. What lay ahead was a big, round number—the last 500 miles.

That evening, I walked three blocks down the main drag to the Salmon Row Pub, a classic Pacific Northwest beer shack that looks as if a strong wind off the gorge could blow it over at any moment. Of the many beers on tap, an aptly named Walking Man India Pale Ale, brewed just across the river, seemed the right choice. I ordered a sausage pizza that the waitress assured me was good for a family of four. And, by God, I got more satisfaction out of that thin-crust pie than any four nonhikers ever would have.

ABOUT A MONTH LATER, on September 4, 2006, I awoke in a bittersweet mood. It was my 43rd birthday. And it was the end. The Canadian border itself is nothing more than a denuded strip, a treeless seam slicing through the forest. I signed the final trail register and tried to sort my thoughts. Over three summers, I had been voluntarily hungry for months. I knew I'd never be able to look at a homeless person in the same way ever again.

I sat down in the dirt to wait for my wife, Susan, to hike in from the nearest road, eight miles away on the Canadian side of the line. In the two months and 750 miles since I'd last seen her, at Odell Lake in central Oregon, I'd lost 18 pounds. When she appeared at the edge of the clearing, for a moment I was dumbstruck. Finally, my heart found the words. "So, did you bring a sandwich?" 



almond-crusted chicken tender salad

for a delicious side or a filling entrée, enjoy a baby greens salad topped with almond-crusted chicken tenders and a sweet orange-teriyaki-honey dressing.

dressing ingredients

- 1/4 cup Kikkoman Teriyaki Marinade & Sauce
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 2 tbsp honey
- 2 tbsp vinegar
- 1 tsp freshly grated orange peel

salad ingredients

- 1 lb chicken breast tenders
- freshly ground black pepper
- 1 egg
- 1 tbsp Kikkoman Teriyaki Marinade & Sauce
- 1/2 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/2 cup Kikkoman Panko Bread Crumbs
- 1/2 cup smoked almonds, finely chopped
- 2-3 tbsp vegetable oil
- 6 cups mixed baby salad greens
- 2 oranges, peeled and cut into segments

orange-teriyaki-honey dressing

Whisk together teriyaki sauce, olive oil, honey, vinegar and orange peel.

chicken salad

- 1 Season chicken tenders with pepper. Beat egg with teriyaki sauce in shallow bowl until well blended.
- 2 Place flour in shallow dish. Combine bread crumbs and almonds in another shallow dish.
- 3 Dust both sides of chicken with flour, then dip into egg mixture and finally coat with almond mixture.
- 4 In 12-inch skillet, heat 2 tbsp vegetable oil over medium-high heat. Add chicken and cook 6 to 7 minutes, or until no longer pink in center, turning over once and adding more oil as needed.
- 5 Divide salad greens among 4 dinner plates. Arrange chicken and orange segments on greens. Serve with Orange-Teriyaki-Honey Dressing.

Serves 4



To enter our 50th Anniversary Sweepstakes, please visit www.kikkoman50.com

Discover more unique recipes.

yourteriyaki.com

ESSAY

Religion Found

Shopping for food can itself be a spiritual reward

BY FRANCINE PROSE

TO BE HONEST, my most heartfelt and urgent moments of prayer nearly always involve air turbulence and ice storms on the highway. As a proverb known only to my family holds, there are no atheists in the endodontist's waiting room or the mammography center. Still, I understand the desire for an everyday spiritual life, and I may even have one, because when my friends and relatives tell me what they seek and find in the church and the synagogue, at the mosque and the meditation retreat, I think, Okay. I get it. That's what I like about grocery shopping.

For fellowship and community, faith, hope, compassion, and transcendence, give me the dewy produce section, the banks of fresh fish, the bazaars and *mercados* where vendors sell bright, small towers of spices and dried foods with mysterious origins in juicier incarnations. Walking into a market, I feel the kind of rush that, I imagine, visits the faithful in the cathedral of Notre-Dame or the Hagia Sophia in Istanbul. There's that sense of the spirit soaring upward, combined with the trembly excitement of belief. Something good is about to happen and leave me changed for the better.

Grocery shopping is what I do for comfort and consolation when things aren't going well and to celebrate when they are. It's an antidepressant without the side effects except, possibly, weight gain. As a reward for myself, it satisfies the same craving that I used to answer, more stupidly, with cigarettes. When I leave the fish market on

Ninth Avenue with a bag full of shrimp and crawfish for a jambalaya, I'm always in a sanguine frame of mind. Walking 20 blocks to reach the old-fashioned pork store in Greenwich Village; getting off the number 44 bus in Rome, which leaves me at the San Giovanni di Dio market; hearing the fish women compete for my business at the Colaba Market in Mumbai, where I lived for a year, I am giddy, bordering on ecstatic. In a market in Aix-en-Provence, where the heaps of autumn mushrooms can be smelled from around the corner, I experience something like the awe that astronauts describe on first seeing Earth from space.

LIKE MANY RELIGIOUS experiences, grocery shopping has a bracing purity that's an antidote to a sense of guilt, which makes it a fairly unusual form of shopping. I can agonize for days about the shoes for which I paid a fortune so that they could irritate that bump on my little toe, but when it comes to food, the cost and effort never seem wasteful or self-indulgent. I am touched, at most, by a tiny twinge about the exorbitant price of the chanterelles. Anyway, what's the problem? I'm buying only a quarter pound. The future seems rosier, more hopeful—at least as far ahead as the evening. Beyond that, I can clearly see the reasons to keep on living, reasons as deceptively small as a few fresh eggs scrambled with those chanterelles. A surge of goodwill makes me imagine festive dinners with my kids and friends, and that may be why, as my husband claims, I usually buy twice as much food as we need.

At some point during the trip from entrance to checkout, I'm acutely aware of how fortunate I am, how thankful I should be for the privilege of being able to choose between delicacies practically volunteering to be my dinner. I'm intensely conscious

that there are people exactly like me except for a single fact that makes everything different: they cannot get enough food to feed themselves and their children. I think about the tiny percentage of humans on the planet who can afford the luxury of an even minimally elastic budget.

Indeed, when I am shopping for food, I have a genuine affinity not only with humans in the abstract but also with the people in my physical space. It makes me wildly, unreasonably happy when the professorial gentleman who sells the fresh burrata in his Trastevere shop recognizes me when I return to Rome for a few weeks each spring and we discuss (I using my remedial Italian) how our families are doing. And perhaps those few words of Italian are not even necessary, for what is language compared with our shared knowledge of what it feels like when you remove the green leaves in which the cheese comes wrapped, slice into its glossy white flesh, and watch the pale cream spill out and cover the plate? Just as I've heard religious friends say that, regardless of where they find themselves, they can drop in to the nearest place of worship and commune with the divine just as they do in their own little church around the corner, so, for me, grocery shopping transcends locality and geography, the specifics of culture and place.

Once, in Chinatown, an old woman with whom I shared not one word of a common language nonetheless managed to explain to me the preparation that would transform an intimidating dried fungus that resembled a large mahogany wall scone into something that would be not only delicious but curative. The smile on her face, when it became clear that I'd grasped her instructions

FRANCINE PROSE's most recent book is *Reading Like a Writer: A Guide for People Who Love Books and for Those Who Want to Write Them* (HarperCollins, 2006). This is her first article for SAVEUR.

The meat counter at a Paris supermarket.

PROMOTION
de la semaine

89^{F90}
le kg

Andouille de Guémené AMAND
porc, origine FRANCE

138



ESSAY

and intended to implement them at home, reminded me of the hopeful, cheerful expressions I've seen on people leaving church and pausing to congratulate the minister on the clarity and helpfulness of his sermon.

In the warehouselike Fairway Market on 132nd Street in Manhattan, my emotions swell beyond the spiritual to include the patriotic. The rich stew bubbling in the American melting pot rarely seems quite so appealing as it does in the aisles crowded with neighborhood Dominican kids carrying long sugarcane stalks beside Scarsdale matrons who have driven down for the foie gras special. How varied the world is, how many kinds of people inhabit it, and how amazing that all of them have converged here to celebrate it. Sooner or later, it always occurs to me that I'm not the only one savoring this moment of grocery-aisle bliss. How else to account for the spirit of camaraderie that emanates from these New Yorkers, so accustomed to jostling and scrambling? All around me, the tall are volunteering to reach items on the higher shelves for their diminutive fellow customers, and even the most harried of them are moving aside and making way for the shopping carts of strangers.

When I was a child, a slogan appeared on billboards and bumper stickers: "The family that prays together stays together." The accompanying image showed Mom, Dad, Junior, and Sis looking strengthened thanks to their shared encounter with the divine. Well, I would like to make the same claim for grocery shopping as domestic fortification. I can go it alone, but I prefer shopping with my husband, who is, after all, the gifted family cook. That makes the whole process more than a food-buying expedition, more than an aesthetic invitation to admire the bounty of the harvest and the magic that humans can work with the edible ingredients at hand. It's an ongoing conversation, an episode in a partnership, and also a discussion of what looks good and what we might have for dinner. When Howie and I first got together, on some evenings we'd go to the local supermarket and treat ourselves to the canned or frozen favorite comfort foods of our respective childhoods.

I HAVE READ THAT SOME therapists claim they can predict the success of a marriage by tallying a couple's ratio of positive and

negative interactions. I'd suggest an alternative method: watch them as they shop for food. Not long ago, I was delighted to witness my son and daughter-in-law practically swooning with joy over a huge, cheap global supermarket they'd just discovered in East Williamsburg, Brooklyn, where they live. Like me, they're the kind of traveler that, in a foreign city, heads for the food market first.

I've heard people say they hate grocery shopping, and I empathize. There are those, after all, who don't like stained-glass windows and the smell of incense. Also, I can't pretend that every trip to the corner store is a happy one. Some places make it easier than others. It's a no-brainer to intuit the divine in Barcelona's La Boqueria or the Campo de' Fiori in Rome, but it's a bit of a challenge to wax rapturous in my neighborhood megastore. As I wait in line (lines, actually) with two hundred or more people and half a dozen traffic controllers, I react the same way I do when I pass the displays of creepily uniform raspberries. What I feel is less ecstasy than the antsy buzz I also get in the cosmetics sections of upscale department stores.

I've grocery-shopped at Wal-Mart, and let me say that it doesn't invigorate me. Maybe it's the light, or the lack of light, or the absence of windows, or, more likely, the lack of connection between the guy misting the squashes and the squashes themselves. Or maybe it's the melancholy mien of the shoppers around me, who look as if, like me, they'd rather be anywhere else. Oddly, it reminds me of marketgoing in the Soviet-era East bloc, which offered a daily demonstration of the relationship between totalitarianism, the general mood of the populace, and the drabness of the food for sale.

At such times, I'm especially grateful that I still have a choice. I can hike to the pork store, buy greens in Chinatown, go to the farmers' market when it's open. It's a choice that seems important and worth holding on to. Though I don't imagine for a heartbeat that it's what the founding fathers had in mind when they designed our democracy, I can't help thinking that the ability to buy food at stores and markets that touch and revive our souls should be a constitutional right, protected under the provision that guarantees freedom of worship. 



*More than a
Recipe.*
It's a way of life.



Explore the possibilities at
www.cordonbleu.edu

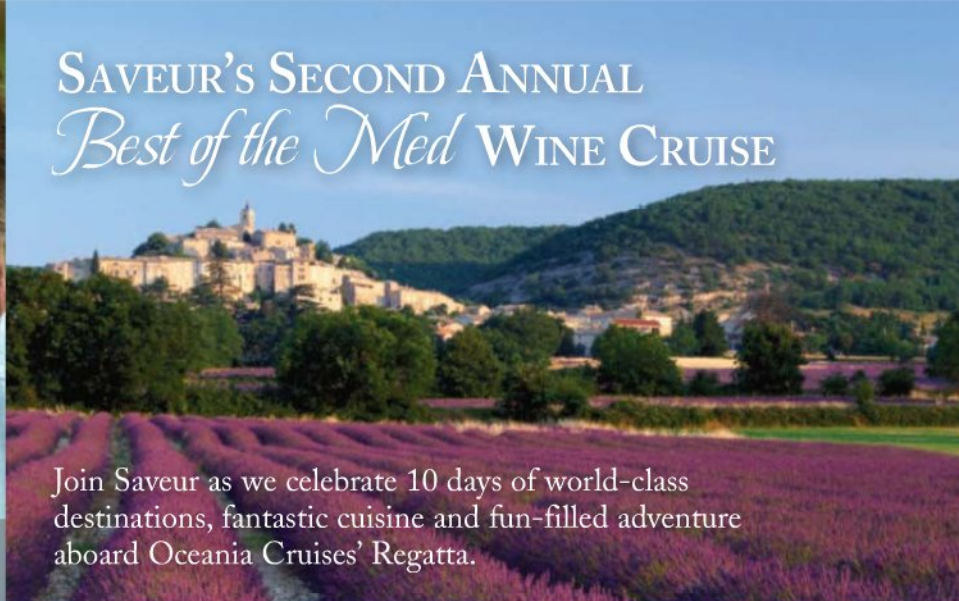


PAUL LUKACS
SAVEUR Wine Editor



MICHAEL BEAULAC
ST. SUPÉRY Winemaker

SAVEUR'S SECOND ANNUAL *Best of the Med* WINE CRUISE



Join Saveur as we celebrate 10 days of world-class destinations, fantastic cuisine and fun-filled adventure aboard Oceania Cruises' Regatta.

Free Air AND Special Group Discounts

Barcelona to Rome • 10-DAY VOYAGE

Sail Date Aboard Regatta: May 9, 2008

Barcelona • Palma de Mallorca • Provence (Marseille)
Saint-Tropez • Monte Carlo • Portofino • Florence/Pisa (Livorno)
Olbia/Porto Cervo (Sardinia) • Sorrento/Capri (Overnight)
Amalfi/Positano • Rome (Civitavecchia)

FROM
\$2,749 PER GUEST

INSIDE STATEROOM
WITH FREE AIRFARE

FROM
\$3,249 PER GUEST

OCEAN VIEW STATEROOM
WITH FREE AIRFARE

*Reserve your cruise by December 1, 2007, and receive complimentary
Prepaid Onboard Gratuities – a value of up to \$300 per stateroom.*

**FOOD
& WINE
TRAILS**
EPICUREAN TOURS
A Division of HMS Travel

Reserve your suite or stateroom on our
Best of the Med Wine Cruise today!

Food & Wine Trails • 800-303-4800
www.foodandwinetrails.com

THIS SAVEUR WINE CRUISE INCLUDES:

- A 10-day Mediterranean voyage on the cruise line voted one of the best in the world by readers of Travel + Leisure Magazine
- Cuisine designed by Executive Chef Jacques Pépin
- Personally escorted by Saveur's wine editor Paul Lukacs and by St. Supéry's winemaker Michael Beaulac
- Private parties and a St. Supéry winemaker dinner
- Exclusive tasting of rare vintages, 1994-2004, and a fun component tasting: "Learn to be your own winemaker"
- Prepaid gratuities as an early-booking incentive, a value of up to \$300 per stateroom
- Country club-casual ambiance; no tuxedos or gowns required
- Private (optional) shore trips and lunches to such wineries as Ornellaia, one of the few wineries to receive a perfect 100 score from Wine Spectator
- Optional post-cruise Barcelona wine experience including a tour of the Penedes appellation and a winemaker dinner with Huguet De Can Feixes
- Informative wine discussions by Paul Lukacs, a wine columnist for The Washington Times and Washingtonian magazine, as well as author of "The Great Wines of America." Paul's first book, "American Vintage: The Rise of American Wine," won the three major wine Book of the Year awards in 2001.

OCEANIA CRUISES®
Your World. Your Way.®

ST. SUPÉRY
NAPA VALLEY



Fares listed are cruise only in U.S. dollars, per person, based on double occupancy and include Non-Discountable Fares. Fares do not include government fees and charges, taxes, and handling and security charges. All fares and offers are subject to availability, may not be combinable with other offers, are capacity controlled and may be withdrawn at any time without prior notice. 2 for 1 fares are based on published Full Brochure Fares; all fares are cruise only, and do not include Prepaid Charges, Optional Facilities and Services Fees, and personal charges, as defined in the Terms and Conditions of the Guest Ticket Contract which may be viewed at www.OceaniaCruises.com. Full Brochure Fares may not have resulted in actual sales in all cabin categories and may not have been in effect during the last 90 days. Promotional fares may remain in effect after the expiration date. Air promotion applies to economy, round-trip flights only from select Oceania Cruises U.S. & Canadian gateways and does not include ground transfers, air taxes and air fuel surcharges. Air ticketing fee will apply. Free Airfare is available only from the following Oceania Cruises Primary Air Gateways: ATL, BOS, ORD, DFW, DEN, IAH, LAX, MIA, JFK, EWR, MCO, PHL, PHX, SAN, SFO, SEA, TPA, YYZ, YVR, IAD. Airfare is available from all other U.S. & Canadian gateways at an additional charge. Oceania Cruises reserves the right to correct errors or omissions. Additional terms and conditions may apply. Complete terms and conditions may be found in the Guest Ticket Contract. Ships' Registry: Marshall Islands. JUN0735. FOOD & WINE TRAILS CST #1005413-10.

CLASSIC

Madeleine's Journey

This simple but legendary cookie has crumbled well over time

BY LILY BINNS

LIKE MANY A HOLLYWOOD starlet, the scallop-shaped cookie called the madeleine has risen to lofty heights from humble beginnings. I used to buy them in dainty packages of two for an old sweetheart of mine, who loved them. They were moist and vanilla scented, more like miniature pound cakes than cookies. What I learned only later was that the traditional, fresh-baked version of the treat—the one that kicked off the French novelist Marcel Proust's nostalgic journey in *In Search of Lost Time*, his monumental, seven-volume opus—is something else entirely. More crumbly and less sweet, it cries out for a dab of fresh-fruit preserves or a dunk in a cup of tea with milk. I also found out that the beloved madeleine—in its simplest form, a combination of flour, butter, eggs, and sugar—has a complex past.

The madeleine falls into a broad category of small, cakelike desserts—including the French macaroon and the Dutch koekje—that were the forerunners of what we know today as cookies (the English name is likely taken, in fact, from that of the aforementioned Dutch dessert). The madeleine has long been linked with the town of Commercy, in France's Lorraine region, where more than 200 million of the cookies are made each year. In the mid-18th century, as one creation legend goes, the deposed Polish king Stanislas Leszczyński, who had a residence in Commercy, gave a version of the sweet—which was named, by some accounts, for the maid who baked them at the last minute for a feast—to his daughter Maria, wife of the French monarch Louis XV. Maria brought a taste for madeleines back with her to Versailles, the seat of the French monarchy, where the cookie's popularity grew steadily.

Another telling holds that fans of the cookie have Charles-Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord, an influential 18th-century French diplomat, to thank for its invention. In the late 1700s, the



METHOD

Madeleines

In this recipe, which we based on one in *Larousse gastronomique*, baking soda is added as a leavening agent in order to accentuate the madeleine's telltale hump. (Some recipes state that letting the batter rest before baking creates a higher hump; we found the difference to be negligible.) Heat oven to 375°. Grease two 12-mold madeleine pans containing 3"-long molds (see page 96) with 2 tsp. butter. Melt 6 tbsp. plus 1 tsp. butter in a pot over medium-low heat; let cool for 10 minutes. Whisk together 1¾ cups cake flour, 1 cup sugar, ½ tsp. baking soda, finely grated zest of 2 lemons, and a pinch of salt in a bowl; fold in 4 beaten eggs until smooth. Add butter; fold until just mixed. Divide batter between molds, filling each about three-fourths of the way. Bake, rotating once, until golden brown, 15–20 minutes. Remove cookies from molds; let cool slightly. Makes 2 dozen.

story goes, Talleyrand's pastry chef introduced the madeleine to his master's court, baking them in shallow, scallop-shaped aspic molds that helped produce enticingly crisp edges—and a star was born. According to the 1966 edition of *Larousse gastronomique*, the august French food encyclopedia, the recipe "remained a secret for a very long time [and] was sold for a very large sum to the pastry-makers of Commercy".

While the foregoing narratives have each gained wide acceptance, a number of curious parallels hint at a religious dimension to the madeleine's story. In Spain, a cupcake-like sweet called the magdalena—made with sugar, flour, eggs, and, sometimes, olive oil—is a favorite breakfast pastry. That confection's name may derive from that of Mary Magdalene, the biblical figure and saint known in France as Marie Madeleine. One of the purported resting places of Mary Magdalene's remains is the French town of Vézelay, an important stop along the famous Christian pilgrimage route that ends in the Spanish town of Santiago de Compostela. In turn, one of the symbols most closely associated with that pilgrimage is the scallop shell. Whether the madeleine is in fact related to the Spanish magdalena is purely a matter of conjecture, to be sure, but the topic makes for good breakfast conversation.

Despite the madeleine's murky origins, most recipes for it have retained their simplicity, though some have evolved over time to include subtle flavorings like lemon zest, honey, vanilla, and orange flower water. Some pastry chefs have dared to go even further, reinterpreting the pastry by adding a variety of components, from molasses to star anise, to the batter. Personally, I prefer the classic madeleine, which I now bake at home. I like to pluck them warm right from their molds, hold one between forefinger and thumb, dip it into my tea, and contemplate, Proust-like, just how far this cookie has come. 🍪

TASTE PERFECTION



© Marvel 2007



*Marvel® Clear Ice Machine
30iM*

The perfect martini begins with the perfect ice. And, if you want perfect ice, you need Marvel. Here's why.

Making crystal clear ice has nothing to do with your water. It's how the water is frozen. Most ice makers freeze standing water that contains sediments and minerals. So the ice is cloudy and porous. It tastes a little strange and melts too quickly, not exactly what you want for your favorite drink.

The Marvel Clear Ice Machine freezes fine layers of water to remove impurities. Creating cubes that would satisfy a perfectionist. Your ice will sparkle like diamonds and melt ever so slowly.

Chilling your beverage faster. Keeping it colder longer. And preserving its optimal flavor.

Marvel. Isn't it time you tasted perfection?

To learn more about the Marvel® line of cutting edge undercounter refrigeration—visit us at www.lifeluxurymarvel.com

www.lifeluxurymarvel.com



An AGA Company





AMERICAN PRIME

NO OTHER FOOD arouses our appetite like a just-grilled steak. Lightly charred on the outside, juicy and tender within, and garlanded by luscious fat, it promises satisfaction both primal and refined. Little wonder, then, that it has attained an almost mythic status in our culinary culture. Indeed, the story of steak—the ways we cook and eat it and, just as important, the ways we raise the cattle it comes from—continues to unfold alongside the story of our nation itself.

by BETTY FUSSELL | photographs by ANDRÉ BARANOWSKI and BARBARA RIES

An unadorned grilled rib eye, above, is a meal unto itself; facing page and following pages, scenes from La Cense ranch in southwestern Montana.







NOTHING EXPRESSES the flavor of beef better than a good steak—an ability that owes, in part, to the food's simplicity.

The quick cooking over high heat of a modest-size cut of beef, taken from any of the more tender muscles of a steer, is a triumphant union of practicality and taste. Though steak has European origins—the word itself is derived from the Old Norse *steikja*, which means to roast on a spit—it is fair to say that the food didn't really come into its own until it crossed the Atlantic. Indeed, steak has in many ways become a symbol of the American dream: it is both a staple of the workingman's table and an icon of material achievement.

Our country's appetite for beef and, particularly, steak has fundamentally changed the social, economic, and even physical landscape of the United States. It has made entrepreneurs rich, spawned cities and towns, launched restaurant empires, and inspired a culinary lexicon all its own. Yet it remains an enduring emblem of our frontier history, evoking the legendary romance, innocence, and violence of the American West. In fact, if you want to go to the source of some

Marinated flank steak, facing page; right, dry-aged whole short loins at Peter Luger steak house in New York.

of the best American steak, you still have to travel to the country's Western states, to places like the 88,000-acre La Cense Montana ranch, in the southwestern part of that state, one of the oldest continuously operating cattle ranches in the country, established in 1869.

Although a century and a half of industrialization has helped make steak as commonplace as bread in many American households, beef producers like La Cense are returning to more-meticulous ranching methods that reflect the way cattle used to be raised in this country (and still are in places like Argentina)—that is, on native pastureland. Their labors are yielding some of the most extraordinary steaks I have ever tasted—marbled and juicy and cut from Black Angus steers and heifers that eat nothing but grass in their lifetime. For me, visiting La Cense—and seeing how such an enterprise fits into the complicated history of beef in America—is key to understanding, in a visceral, historical, and economic sense, where my steak comes from.

FIRST A PAIR OF TINY black hooves appears, followed by the nose, the head, and, with an earth-shaking moo from the mother, the rest of a newborn calf, which lands in the cool grass right in front of me. Mama turns to lick her

COMING OF AGE

FORGET THE “FRESHER IS BETTER” rule, which applies to most meat: when it comes to beef, age is an asset. All beef—even shrink-wrapped supermarket cuts—undergoes a period of aging that tenderizes the meat, gently breaking down muscle fibers and, in some cases, ripening its flavor. Aging is especially important for steak, which is usually cooked quickly over high heat (as opposed to slower, tenderizing methods like braising).

The traditional technique, dry aging, is an art practiced by old-school butchers, meat distributors, and steak house chefs. Meat is stored in temperature- and humidity-controlled environments, gradually losing water weight and developing a rind, which is carved away. Aging time varies: some butchers believe two



weeks is enough, while others age cuts for three weeks or more to concentrate flavor to a deep, nutty intensity. It's a time-consuming process, but it's essential for the best results. The difficulty of maintaining the ideal temperature and humidity—conditions crucial for preventing bacterial contamination—eliminates dry aging at home as an option for most people. Dry aging is still practiced by relatively few. In fact, 90 percent of retail-marketed beef is wet-aged.

In wet aging, cuts are vacuum-sealed in plastic after slaughter and remain there until they're butchered for sale—on average, 23 days. Some argue that, beyond tenderizing the beef, wet aging does little more than prolong shelf life and reduce cost; by contrast with dry-aged beef, wet-aged meat suffers comparably little loss in volume, but it also does not gain markedly in flavor. Others argue, however, that because wet aging allows beef to retain its moisture, it tends to produce juicier results. —B.F.

METHOD

Marinated Flank Steak

The flavorful cut of beef known as flank steak (facing page) also frequently goes by the name london broil. Toast 1 tbsp. black peppercorns, 1 tbsp. coriander seeds, 1 tbsp. fennel seeds, 2 broken dried chiles de árbol, and 2 fresh bay leaves in a small skillet over high heat, stirring occasionally, until fragrant, 2–3 minutes. Transfer aromatics to a hard surface; lightly crush with the bottom of a heavy skillet; then transfer to a 9" x 13" baking dish. Add 1/2 cup red wine, 2 tbsp. red wine vinegar, 2 tbsp. worcestershire, 4 crushed cloves garlic, 2 sprigs fresh rosemary, and 1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil; whisk to combine. Poke one 2-lb. flank steak (see page 63) all over with a fork and place in marinade; spoon some marinade over top. Cover and refrigerate, turning occasionally, for 12–24 hours. An hour before grilling, transfer steak to a plate; set aside at room temperature. Transfer marinade to a small pot and bring just to a boil; set aside. Build a medium-hot charcoal fire in your grill. Grill steak, turning once and, using a brush, basting with reserved marinade occasionally, until browned and medium rare, 7–8 minutes per side. Transfer to a cutting board, tent with foil, and let rest for 10 minutes. Carve steak into thin slices on the bias and serve with any accumulated juices. Serves 4.

Steak remains an enduring symbol of our frontier history, evoking the mythic romance, innocence, and violence of the American West



IS IT DONE YET?

WHEN IT COMES TO COOKING a steak, most restaurant cooks have the seemingly magical ability to take the meat off the heat at exactly the right time. For most of us at home, however, learning to cook a steak to perfection is a process of trial and error. But take heart: you don't need X-ray vision to divine the color of the inside of a thick steak; just some basic know-how.

As a steak cooks, its flesh becomes firmer and loses its red color, proceeding from "blue" (nearly raw) to rare (deep red) to medium rare (deep pink) to medium (light pink) to medium well (gray with a hint of pink) to well-done (gray throughout). Many agree that medium rare is usually the level that brings out a steak's best qualities. Indeed, any steak from the chuck or the round of a steer should be cooked no further, since those firm, hardworking muscles will quickly become chewy.

The most important thing to remember before turning on the flame is that steaks cook fast (especially those from lean, grass-fed cattle). Also know that a meat thermometer usually isn't a good option, since it's hard to get a reliable reading using most standard models; also, following many published guidelines for judging doneness by temperature—including those issued by the USDA—will ensure that your steak is overcooked. Many tricks have been devised over the years for determining the doneness of a steak. Some cooks do it by checking firmness: an old (and, we've found, unreliable) rule says a rare steak should feel like the soft flesh of the crook of the hand when it's unclenched. Others follow a ten-minutes-per-inch rule.

But for our money—and when we're shelling out for a prime-grade porterhouse, that's not an inconsiderable factor—the single best solution is the tried-and-true "nick and peek" method. Make a small cut in the steak, take a look inside, and judge the color for yourself. Until you've confidently mastered your own method, though, err on the side of caution and take the steak off slightly before you think it's achieved its desired doneness. Also keep in mind that with thicker steaks, lean cuts (like filet mignon) cook faster than fattier ones (like rib eye) and that the presence of a bone prolongs cooking time. —Todd Coleman

baby clean while Dan Hill, a 66-year-old La Cense cowboy who wears a miner's lamp strapped to his hat, puts a drop of antiseptic on the umbilical cord and attaches a numbered tag to the calf's ear. This is the fourth birth of the night; by tomorrow night there'll be a dozen more, adding to a herd that already comprises roughly 700 steers, 2,000 mother cows, 1,000 yearlings, and 2,000 calves.

During spring calving season, Hill and the other ranch employees are as much medical technicians as cowboys. Using ultrasound, they were able to predict exactly when the cow we've just watched give birth would go into labor. Sometimes, Hill tells me, if the mother takes too long, they'll move her into the calving barn, a maternity ward-like facility. If a mother has twins, they'll take one of the calves and feed it by hand every six hours until they find a surrogate mother who's lost her own calf—since one of a pair of twins left with its birth mother most often won't survive once it enters the herd.

"You can't learn it from books," 69-year-old ranch manager Bud Griffith tells me the next morning as he shows me around the ranch's facilities. "Cowboying's a way of life." But as I learned last night, that doesn't mean that ranchers like Griffith and Hill are stuck in some storybook past.

William Kriegel, La Cense's 62-year-old owner, is one of a growing number of advocates of what's known as "natural ranching". For Kriegel, a native of France who owned an energy company before becoming involved in ranching two decades ago, that means running a ranch that integrates cattle raising with programs focused on equine studies. It also means operating outside the industrialized beef system—where more than 99 percent of American beef comes from—and not

BETTY FUSSELL, author of *The Story of Corn* (Knopf, 1992) and *My Kitchen Wars* (North Point Press, 1999), is writing a history of American beef, to be published next year by Harcourt.

placing blind faith in USDA descriptions like "prime" and "choice", which identify fat content and age as the major determinants of flavor (see "Making the Grade", page 65). It also means raising hormone- and antibiotic-free cattle whose meat can be called exclusively grass-finished—that is, animals that have grazed in open pasture from birth to slaughter.

These practices represent a dramatic departure from the way most beef is generated in the (continued on page 54)

RECIPE

Filets Mignons with Mushroom Sauce

SERVES 4

This luscious sauce adds complex flavor to filet mignon (right), a mild-tasting cut.

- 6 tbsp. butter, cut into small pieces
- 3 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 4 8-oz. filets mignons (see page 61)
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 2 shallots, finely chopped
- 1 lb. cremini mushrooms, sliced
- 1 cup red wine
- 1 cup chicken stock
- 2 tsp. cornstarch, mixed with 1 tbsp. water
- 2 tbsp. mixed chopped chives and parsley
- 2 tbsp. sherry

Heat oven to 500°. Heat 1 tbsp. butter and 1 tbsp. oil in a large skillet over high heat. Season filets with salt and pepper; sear, flipping once, until browned, 4–5 minutes. Transfer filets to a baking sheet; roast in oven until medium rare, 4–5 minutes. Transfer filets to a plate. Return skillet to medium-high heat. Add 1 tbsp. butter, remaining oil, and shallots; cook for 1 minute. Add mushrooms; cook for 5 minutes. Add red wine; bring to a boil. Reduce to medium; cook until syrupy, 8–10 minutes. Add stock; reduce slightly, 4–5 minutes. Whisk in cornstarch mixture; bring to a boil. Add sherry; cook until thickened, 2–3 minutes. Remove from heat; whisk in remaining butter, herbs, and salt and pepper. Serve filets with mushroom sauce.

Demand for steak soared at the turn of the 19th century, but as early as 1882, *Harper's Weekly* was already heralding what it called the "era of cheap beef"





James Cook 177-200
Peter Lu
1981

THE HALLOWED HALLS OF BEEF

CATTLE AND CAPITALISM go together like gin and tonic, and with good reason: where there's beef, there's money. And nothing embodies this sacred union more perfectly than that most venerable of American gastronomic institutions, the steak house. You know the place: the cocktails are generously poured, the cigar smoke is thick, the bill is hefty, and the unadorned prime steaks are charred, juicy, and beautiful. And yet, despite the high-roller trappings, there's something undeniably down-to-earth about a steak house meal. What's more, for all the nostalgia surrounding them, steak houses are still *the* places to get great steak in this country.

These great American establishments haven't always represented a high-end splurge, though, at least according to Andrew F. Smith, editor of *The Oxford Companion to American Food and Drink* (Oxford University Press, 2007). The historian traces the roots of steak houses to the convivial dining halls that were common across Europe as early as the 1500s and also to the no-frills working-class chophouses and beefsteak clubs of Victorian-era Britain. The first recognizable forebears of today's steak houses started appearing in the big northeastern cities of the United States in the late 18th century. These so-called chop houses and porterhouses (named for the porter-style beer customarily served there) usually served large cuts from the short loin of British-breed steer and heifers. Early recipes stipulated that the steaks be pan-fried, but eventually they were grilled or broiled and served starkly on a plate.

The real heyday for steak houses arrived in the late 19th century, when the advent of the refrigerated railcar permitted the shipment of huge quantities of beef to the

great meatpacking centers of Chicago and New York, where a robust and distinctly masculine beef-eating culture flourished. The 1894 publication of *The Epicurean*, published by New York's legendary Delmonico's restaurant, includes almost 100 recipes for steak, many of them presumably named for the deep-pocketed characters who'd dined there over the years. By the turn of the century, beefsteak had become so popular as the meal of choice for large gatherings of men that the word came to describe not only the food but also the event itself. A rollicking "beefsteak", complete with beer and entertainment, became a staple at social clubs and speakeasies, especially during Prohibition. Over time, women—and the fancy airs they brought with them—invaded these citadels, a development lamented in a 1939 *New Yorker* article by the essayist Joseph Mitchell. "For generations men had worn their second-best suits because of the inevitability of grease spots," Mitchell wrote. "Tuxedos and women appeared simultaneously."

Cooking methods and the choice of cuts at classic steak houses vary and are the subject of endless debate. The kitchen at New York's Peter Luger (see "Magnificent Seven", right), for example, slices its signature broiled porterhouse before it's served, creating a striking presentation but allowing—so say the critics—precious juices to drain onto the plate, while Sparks, another archetypal New York steak house, brings its massive sirloin to the table whole. Regional variations on the steak house theme have also evolved: Texans, for example, seem to like them big, while New York and Las Vegas have welcomed the arrival of high-profile chefs and vastly expanded menu offerings, including all manner of grass-fed and heritage-breed beef. —Josh Ozersky, online food editor of *New York magazine* and author of *Meat Me* in Manhattan (*Gamble Guides*, 2003)

MAGNIFICENT SEVEN

Whatever their particular character, all good steak houses honor a pledge to send us on our way full, perhaps a little tipsy, and deeply satisfied. Listed alphabetically below are seven establishments—some old, some new—that we think are carrying on that tradition admirably. (See *THE PANTRY*, page 96, for more information.)

1 | Bern's Steak House, Tampa Going strong since 1956, Bern's is frequently singled out by connoisseurs as the best steak house in America, in large part because the steaks can be ordered to the customer's desired thickness to within a half inch and to eight different degrees of doneness. The wine list—incidentally, a relatively new addition to the steak house formula—is one of the nation's largest.

2 | Craftsteak, Las Vegas and New York These newcomers from restaurateur Tom Colicchio could be considered the steak houses of the future, and not only for their modish leather banquettes. With an ingredient-focused menu—a theme borrowed from the Manhattan parent restaurant, Craft—Craftsteak limits its sourcing to particular ranches and eschews industrial feedlot beef.

3 | Five O'Clock Steakhouse, Milwaukee It's nearly impossible to score a reservation at this 1960s-era supper club, formerly known as Coerper's Five O'Clock Club; its desirability and clubby atmosphere are only half the fun, though. The gigantic steaks are deeply browned under furnacelike broilers and emerge tender and juicy in the center. Go with the rib eye: a fattier cut, it arrives practically sizzling.

4 | Gene andorgetti, Chicago This 40-year-old, burnished-wood artifact still exudes an unmistakably masculine vibe. The restaurant attracts both tourists and Chicagoland burghers, who look as built into the place as the bricks and mortar. Everyone gets the same superb steaks and chops, though.

5 | Gorat's Steak House, Omaha This homey restaurant, which opened in 1944, bills itself as a New York-style Italian steak house, but it's perhaps best known as super-investor Warren Buffet's favorite hangout. The real draw is the T-bone; it's cooked on a flat metal griddle that browns the steak beautifully.

6 | Pacific Dining Car, Los Angeles This restaurant began its life 86 years ago as a freestanding dining car and has matured over the years into a stellar steak house. The elegant, family-run restaurant's reputation revolves around hand-selected meats—the best of which are the strips and rib eyes—grilled over mesquite coals.

7 | Peter Luger, Brooklyn, New York Founded in 1887, Peter Luger is thought by many to have set the standard for steak house quality; the owners still personally select the very best prime meat, which helps account for the menu's lofty prices. New York boasts a number of other first-class steak houses, but for sheer consistency, Luger leads the pack. —J.O.

Karl Zartler, facing page, a waiter at New York City's famed Peter Luger, one of the country's oldest and best-loved steak houses.

THE RIGHT WINE

WITH FEW EXCEPTIONS, if steak is the meal, red is the color. No matter the cut or the preparation, it is a food that almost always benefits from a dry red wine's tannic structure and depth of flavor. When it comes to marrying steak to red wine, the array of suitors is vast, but a few basic rules of thumb can help guide your choices.

A firm wine from tough-skinned grapes—say, a young California cabernet sauvignon like the Rodney Strong Vineyard Sonoma County 2003 (\$19)—complements a thick, heavily marbled steak because the meat's fat will mute the tannins' otherwise astringent effect. A wine like this might seem excessive if drunk on its own, but it will feel smooth and balanced with a skillet-cooked porterhouse such as the one shown on page 66. Softer-textured cuts of beef—like the filets mignons with mushroom sauce on page 51—don't demand such a tightly structured wine and tend to pair better with a suppler but still substantial red: a Chilean merlot, perhaps, such as Concha y Toro's sumptuous Marques de Casa Concha 2004 (\$19).

A wine's depth and complexity, especially if coming from earthy or spicy notes, also contribute to a successful steak match. These secondary, nonfruit attributes—evocative of the climate and soil in which the grapes matured—give many wines their widely recognized signatures. In France's northern Rhône Valley, for instance, syrah yields wines with a bouquet redolent of crushed black pepper; accordingly, a red like the Domaine Belle Crozes-Hermitage Cuvée Louis Belle 2004 (\$37) would be a great choice with a dish like the strip steaks with green pepper sauce shown on page 64. In Australia's Barossa Valley, the same grape (there called shiraz) tends to produce wines with flavors reminiscent of black licorice and chocolate, so a wine like the Langmeil Valley Floor 2005 (\$25) is just the thing to pair with the marinated flank steak shown on page 48 or with other fairly lean cuts that will benefit from the intense but slightly sweet character of shiraz.

For vivid preparations like the Vietnamese-style steak shown at right, look for reds that have a spicy edge. California zinfandel can be a good choice, as long as it's not too heavy or alcoholic; the Quivira 2004 from the Dry Creek Valley (\$20) would be a fine pick. And for slow-cooked dishes like the swiss steak on the facing page, look for uncomplicated reds with plenty of personality but supple texture; a good, moderately priced malbec from Argentina such as a Dolium's 2004 (\$11) should do the trick. (See THE PANTRY, page 96, to find the wines mentioned above.) —Paul Lukacs



(continued from page 50) U.S. nowadays and, at the same time, a return to methods that flourished prior to World War II. It is impossible to calculate exactly how many producers are raising grass-finished cattle, since many do not market their meat as such. According to data compiled by the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, natural and organic (which generally means hormone- and additive-free) beef accounts for less than 2 percent of U.S. retail beef sales—but its sector is growing faster than that of conventional retail-marketed beef.

IN 2000, WHEN Kriegel bought La Cense from the Japanese-owned company that had owned it for 12 years, the cattle being raised there started their lives on the ranch's grasslands but were, like most beef cattle in this country, soon ushered onto the assembly line of the commodity beef system—a network of feedlots and packing plants, where the steer are butchered into manageable cuts for retailers. Cattle processed under this system are first sent to a feeder, or “backgrounder”, whose job is to prepare the cows' stomachs for

“You can't learn it from books,” says ranch manager Bud Griffith. “Cowboying's a way of life.” But that doesn't mean cattlemen like him are stuck in a storybook past



the highly concentrated grains, corn, and soy-based feed that will compose the diet on which the animals are “finished”—a procedure that rapidly adds a cushion of flavorful fat to the meat—prior to slaughter.

Though the raising of cattle on grain and corn is now the dominant method, doing so on a large scale is a relatively new development. In fact, it was grass that enabled Americans to enjoy such a bounty of beef in the first place. Beginning in the decades before the Civil War, the expansion of

the American frontier opened cattle raising, which first flourished on small livestock farms in the Northeast, to the seemingly limitless grasslands of the Western territories. Those vast pastures beckoned with a year-round buffet of highly nutritious grasses that didn't require tending.

While the livestock farmers of the East favored long-established British breeds, ranchers of the West and Southwest preferred the Texas longhorn, a hardy and semiwild variety descended from (*continued on page 58*)

METHODS

Thit Bò Bít-Tết

(Vietnamese-Style Steak)

The recipe for this dish (facing page) is based on one in *Into the Vietnamese Kitchen* by Andrea Nguyen (Ten Speed Press, 2006). Stir together 6 tbsp. Maggi seasoning sauce (see page 91), 6 tbsp. canola oil, 1½ tsp. freshly ground black pepper, and 12 finely chopped cloves garlic in a wide, shallow dish. Add 2 top sirloin steaks (about 3 lbs. in all; see page 60); rub all over with marinade. Cover; let marinate at room temperature for 30 minutes. Remove steaks from marinade; scrape off most of the garlic. Heat a large cast-iron skillet over medium heat. Add 1 steak and cook until well browned, 3–4 minutes; flip steak and cook until medium rare, 2–3 minutes more. Transfer steak to a cutting board; tent with foil. Repeat process with remaining steak. Thinly slice both steaks across the grain. Serve with rice, any accumulated juices (Nguyen likes to stir her rice in the skillet with the pan juices), and a dash or two more of Maggi seasoning sauce. Serves 4–6.

Swiss Steak

Swiss steak (left) may derive its name from the process of “swissing” textiles, in which cloth is pressed between rollers to soften it. Heat oven to 350°. Heat 1 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil and 1 tbsp. butter in a dutch oven over medium-high heat. Put ¾ cup flour on a wide plate. Season one 2½”-thick top round steak (about 3 lbs.; see page 61) generously all over with salt and pepper, then dredge both sides in flour. Brown steak in dutch oven, turning once, until deep golden brown, 12–14 minutes in all. Transfer steak to a large plate; wipe clean. Heat 1 tbsp. butter and 1 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil in dutch oven over medium heat. Add 4 finely chopped cloves garlic, 2 whole cloves, 1 finely chopped onion, 1 finely chopped carrot, 1 finely chopped rib celery, and 1 bay leaf and cook, stirring occasionally, until onion is softened, 6–8 minutes. Stir in 2 tbsp. tomato paste, 1 tbsp. sweet paprika, and salt and pepper to taste and cook, stirring occasionally, until caramelized, 5–6 minutes. Meanwhile, tie 8 flat-leaf sprigs parsley and 3 sprigs thyme together with butcher's twine; add to pot along with two 12-oz. bottles beer and one 28-oz. can whole peeled tomatoes (with purée), crushing them with your hands as you add them. Bring to a boil; add reserved steak. Cover dutch oven with foil, then the lid. Transfer dutch oven to oven; braise for 1 hour. Uncover dutch oven, flip steak over, and add one 12-oz. bottle beer; cover again with foil and lid. Return to oven; braise steak until tender, about 1 hour more. Uncover dutch oven and discard foil; return to oven. Cook until sauce has thickened and steak has browned, 15–20 minutes more. Discard herb bundle. Season sauce with salt and pepper; transfer to a large platter. Sprinkle with 2 tbsp. chopped flat-leaf parsley, if you like. Serves 6.

As with all great American foods, steak has been adapted to the culinary traditions of our own regional cultures—and of those beyond our borders





LET THEM EAT SIRLOIN

IT COULD BE SAID THAT Americans, at least those who came of age after World War II, have come to think of a hearty steak dinner less as a privilege than as an inalienable right. Few institutions better exemplify this line of thinking than budget steak houses, those Western-themed franchise restaurants—some of them cafeteria style, some sit-down—that have become fixtures of strip malls and interstates. They have names like Bonanza, Sizzler, and Ponderosa, and their menus promise a full steak meal at rock-bottom prices. The steaks are often a thin cut from the chuck or sirloin section—as opposed to the giant porterhouses and filets mignons favored by upscale steak houses—but they rarely fail to satisfy.

Suburban budget steak houses began to appear in the 1950s and '60s; among the first was Sizzler, which was the brainchild of a California salesman named Del Johnson. He got the idea for his restaurant in 1958 after reading about a steak joint in San Francisco called Tad's, which offered faux-Victorian décor and a T-bone steak dinner for \$1.09. (Tad's later inspired a chain of its own.) A few months later, Johnson and his wife, Helen, opened Del's Sizzler Steak House in Culver City, California, making use of a building owned by the father-in-law of his friend Jim Collins, who ran the hamburger stand next door. Del's Sizzler sold two kinds of steak, a top sirloin and a new york cut, accompanied by a baked potato and a green salad adorned with a single cherry tomato.

"He used a wood platter with a hot metal plate in the center that made the steak sizzle," Collins says. "That's where the name came from."

Johnson managed to undersell Tad's by a full ten cents. By the time he sold his business to his friend Collins and two of Collins's partners, in 1967, there were four company-owned restaurants, 160 franchises around the country,

and a growing number of imitators. During a boom in fast-food franchising during the 1960s and '70s, hundreds of budget steak houses cropped up around the country, all offering similar menus and reasonable prices. "When you get a new concept that's doing well, other people come along and try to do something with it," says Collins. "Sizzler definitely spawned a few." With 307 franchises operating today, Sizzler is still going strong amid all that competition. —Todd Coleman

(continued from page 55) a herd first brought to North America by Spanish colonialists in the 19th century. Longhorns were prized not for their meat but for their endurance: they could survive with little food and water on the trails—which were often more than 1,000 miles long—to the auction houses of great meatpacking cities like Kansas City and Chicago. The cattle in those massive herds, sometimes 2,500 strong, invariably arrived at their destination skinny and bedraggled—conditions that made for tough and bland beef. And so, in a foreshadowing of methods that would be adopted on a much larger scale many decades later, meatpackers in the cities took to fattening the animals on grain or corn in stockyard pens before slaughtering them.

The laying of rail across the West, however, reduced the toll the trails took on the texture of the beef; soon ranchers began loading cattle onto railcars that covered large parts of the journey. And by the mid-1880s, cattle were being slaughtered close to where they were raised and shipped in refrigerated railcars to meatpackers. Soon, cattlemen began looking to breeds that fared better on the plate and found them in the British Hereford and Scottish Black Angus. These were eventually crossbred with the Texas longhorn, as well as with other legendary European beef breeds—including France's Charolais and Italy's Chianina—for the creation of even more flavorful beef.

By the turn of the 19th century, the introduction of feedlots, among other factors, had made beef more abundant than ever, and an emerging restaurant culture in cities like Chicago and New York sent the demand for steak soaring. (As early as 1882, *Harper's Weekly* had already heralding what it dubbed the "era of cheap beef".) In the years before World War II, streamlined mechanization and advances in feeding and processing, combined with an oversupply of corn, set the stage for a seismic shift,

away from birth-to-slaughter pasture raising and toward corn feeding. That shift seemed to please both consumers and producers: since corn-fed cattle put on fat faster than their grass-fed brethren, cattlemen could bring their animals to market sooner; and diners eventually came to favor the taste and texture of corn-fed beef, in part because of its fattiness and also because the steer were slaughtered at an earlier, and literally more tender, age.

AMERICANS EAT A lot of beef—the \$49 billion-a-year beef industry is our country's most lucrative agricultural sector—and of all the standard cuts available, those that are sold as steaks (see "Know Your Cuts", facing page), though costlier, are the favorite choice of Americans. To cite another index of popularity: over the past five years, sales at restaurants classifying themselves as steak houses (see "The Hallowed Halls of Beef", page 53) have increased by 13 percent each year, despite an ever more crowded field. In New York City, for example, old-guard steak houses like Peter Luger and Sparks have been joined by chef-driven newcomers like BLT Steak, Porter House New York, and Craftsteak. Chain steak houses, too, are proliferating (see "Let Them Eat Sirloin", left).

That consumers want more steak variety is hardly a secret to restaurateurs, whose offerings today include everything from classic prime-graded sirloins from Black Angus steer—still one of the breeds of choice for conventional beef in this country, in part because the cattle put on weight fast—to expensive cuts from Japanese steer (like the Wagyu, the source of ultratender Kobe-style beef) and other old breeds that offer nuanced flavors and textures. And they are turning to ranchers of grass-fed beef, whose steaks exhibit (continued on page 65)

The owners of Peter Luger steak house in Brooklyn, New York, hand-select short loin cuts directly from the truck, right.



Today, steak houses and specialty stores offer everything from prime-graded Black Angus sirloin to steaks made from grass-fed and heritage-breed cattle

KNOW YOUR CUTS

UNDERSTANDING WHAT PART of the steer or heifer your beef comes from demystifies the experience of buying steak. Of the eight main sections, or primal cuts, of a steer, seven—the chuck (shoulder), the rib (rib section), the plate and flank (underbelly), the short loin (back section), the sirloin (hip), and the round (hindquarter)—yield individual cuts that are tender enough to be sold as

steaks. The rib, short loin, and sirloin are the source of most premium steak house cuts, but tender and flavorful steaks also come from other parts of the steer; the chuck, in particular, is the source of a number of excellent, and inexpensive, steaks. Shown on the following pages are 16 of our favorite cuts. —*Molly Stevens, author of All About Braising (W. W. Norton, 2004)*



1 | Tri-Tip Sirloin Steak

Tri-tip steaks come from a triangle-shaped muscle, known as the tri-tip, located in the bottom part of the sirloin section of the animal, which corresponds to the hip portion. These tender, full-flavored steaks—also known as newport steaks and triangle steaks—weigh three to eight ounces. **2 | Top Loin Steak**

The top loin (the designation “top” is a butchering term that identifies how the muscles sit in relation to one another) is part of the larger primal cut known as the short loin, which in turn is part of the full loin—the muscle group that runs alongside the backbone from the shoulder to the animal’s hip. Boneless top loin steaks go by a potentially confusing array of names—including strip loin and new york strip—and can weigh anywhere from eight to 18 ounces. Bone-in top loin cuts are sometimes called shell steaks or club steaks.

3 | Boneless Shoulder Steak

This large, oblong (and inexpensive) steak comes from the boneless portion of the chuck, or shoulder. These robustly flavored steaks stand up well to marinades; for best results slice thinly on the bias before serving. **4 | Top Sirloin Steak**

These big, boneless steaks come from the largest muscle of the sirloin, a continuation of the top loin. Relatively lean, top sirloins vary in tenderness and size, but all make an economical choice for a satisfying steak dinner. Top sirloin sometimes goes by the names sirloin butt and top sirloin butt.





5 | Boneless Chuck Steak These steaks come from underneath the steer's shoulder blade bone. These well-marbled, intensely flavorful steaks weigh between four and eight ounces and go by a number of names, including chuck filet, chuck eye, and bottom chuck. **6 | Filet Mignon** Filet mignon steaks are made by cutting neat cross-sections from the thicker portion of the little-worked muscle known as the tenderloin, which is the tenderest muscle in the steer. The filet mignon gets its name from the French: *mignon* means dainty. Filets mignons range

from four to 12 ounces each and have virtually no marbling.

7 | Porterhouse When the short loin of a steer is cut crosswise, the resulting steaks contain a portion of the top loin and the tenderloin separated by a T-shaped bone. The porterhouse comes from the thicker end of the short loin (the T-bone comes from closer to the rib and has a considerably smaller portion of the tenderloin). **8 | Top Round Steak** The top round comes from the inside portion of the steer's hind leg. All round steaks are lean, and care should be taken not to overcook them.

9 | Pin-Bone Sirloin Steak

The pin-bone steak is the most succulent of the sirloin steaks. Like the porterhouse, it consists of a piece of tenderloin and a meaty portion of top loin, but it also contains a tell-tale oval cross-section of the hip bone. Pin-bone steaks often include a tail, or flap, of tasty but fatty meat that protrudes above the steak and is usually trimmed off before sale.

10 | Sirloin Tip Steak This cut, also called the knuckle, comes from the part of the hindquarter of the steer closest to the tender sirloin, but it actually extends into the round, of which it is a part. Thus, sirloin tips are the tenderest of the round cuts; in fact, butchers often label them sirloin. Shaped like a half moon, this lean and quick-cooking cut weighs about eight ounces and delivers good, beefy flavor at a great price.

11 | Hanger Steak There is only one hanger steak per steer; part of the diaphragm, it “hangs” from the last rib when the animal is suspended during butchering. The meat of these steaks has deep, satisfying flavor, but, as with other coarse-grained cuts like flank and skirt, it can be chewy if cooked past medium rare.

12 | First-Cut Chuck Blade Steak This wide, well-marbled steak, usually weighing about eight ounces, consists of several different muscles from the rib end of the chuck. Only the first few steaks cut from this part of the chuck may be labeled first cut, and these are recognizable by a flat piece of blade bone. (See page 92 for more about this steak.)



9



10



11



12



13 | Flank Steak This flat, rectangular steak (also called a london broil) from the belly of the steer is distinguished by the coarse grain that runs lengthwise across it. Its big flavor and fibrous texture take well to grilling or broiling, as long as you don't cook it past medium rare and, when serving, remember to slice it thinly across the grain. **14 | Skirt Steak** The loose grain and intensely beefy taste of skirt steak—the long diaphragm muscle of the steer—most often makes its appearance in the Tex-Mex favorite fajitas. **15 | Top Blade Chuck Steak** This small, oblong cut from the chuck—also called a flatiron steak—is the second-tenderest in the entire steer

after the tenderloin. A thin line of gristle runs down the center; increasingly, butchers remove it, making thin, rectangular steaks. Top blade steaks range from four to eight ounces each. **16 | Rib Eye Steak** These well-marbled steaks, taken from the steer's rib section, offer the perfect balance between the tough, full-flavored chuck and the super-tender but milder-flavored loin. Rib eyes taken from the rib end closest to the chuck consist of a number of different muscles. Rib eyes taken from the end closest to the loin, like the one shown, do too, but include a bigger portion of the prized eye meat and are often pricier.



(continued from page 58) flavors evocative of the place where the cattle were raised. By trumpeting this diversity of taste and provenance, producers finally seem to be chipping away at our long-standing predilection for corn-fed meat.

La Cense, one of the nation's largest producers of grass-fed beef, raises its animals with an emphasis on steak. Kriegel says his top-selling cuts are top sirloin, New York strip, and rib eye, all of which are dry-aged before sale (see "Coming of Age," page 49). Kriegel has been surprised by the public's response. When an outsider can move to an old cattle town in the rural West and start selling grass-fed beef, he says, "it tells you something has changed, especially when local people are coming to our store to buy our beef and asking to visit our ranch."

"The cow is what the grass eats," La Cense's Griffith tells me as we tread over some of the bluebunch wheatgrass that is pushing up through the dun-colored earth on the company's property. He's talking about soil; the French would say he's talking about terroir. Indeed, the raising of cattle in a specific place, he tells me, can be as exact an art as the growing and ripening of grapes. La Cense cattle feed on tall grass—ten inches, usually—so they eat just the tops, which have the most nutrients. Once the tops are gone, the cattle

are moved to a different pasture, while the grazed grasses grow back to their original height, which takes about 20 days, at which point the cattle may return. A single pasture can usually be grazed five to six times in a season.

During the winter, grazing is restricted to the valley lowland pastures, which support wheatgrasses and orchard grasses. For summer grazing, the cattle are relocated into the nearby Blacktail Mountains, where bluebunch wheatgrass and Idaho fescue thrive. As with most grass-finished cattle, the cows' diet translates into unique and subtle herbaceous flavors in the beef.

As La Cense cattle approach their second autumn—when they are roughly 18 months old—they are brought to slaughter at a nearby facility that caters to natural-beef producers and, unlike commodity-beef processors, houses the cattle in clean, spacious quarters. "You need a stress-free environment," says Kriegel. "Otherwise, the stress affects the steak's texture."

FOR MOST LOVERS of steak, in the end it is all about taste. And when it comes to the art and science of cooking one, whether it's a grass-fed filet mignon from a specialty purveyor or a top-blade chuck purchased at the local supermarket,

MAKING THE GRADE

THE PASSION FOR PRIME STEAK is fueled by how little of it there is to go around. Less than 4 percent of all beef that passes through USDA gradings—which, unlike safety inspection, is voluntary and paid for by the meat processor—is labeled prime, and most of that lands on pricey steak house menus or in high-end butcher shops. Among the criteria for inclusion in this elite tier are fat marbling (the more, the better) and the animal's age (younger animals have less collagen in their muscle and, thus, tenderer meat).

The USDA instituted the grading system in 1926, with the aim of supplying the consumer with a reliable indication of quality. There are eight government grades for beef: prime, choice, select, standard, commercial, utility, canner, and cutter. Steak aficionados seek out the top two, prime and choice (the latter of which represents more than half of all graded beef), which are streaked with plenty of intramuscular fat—a condition that makes them tender enough for dry-heat cooking methods like grilling, roasting, and broiling. Steaks that have been graded select—a variety primarily sold in supermarkets—are generally too lean to yield better than average results. The remaining grades designate meat that's sold wholesale, for use in a range of products, from frozen foods to hot dogs, though the majority of this wholesale-class meat isn't graded at all. The reason is that most meatpackers don't bother to seek grading for cuts they know won't receive prime or choice designations, which fetch the highest prices. This ungraded meat is often called "no roll"; the term refers to the absence of the USDA grade stamp, which is rolled onto the carcass.

In addition to the federal grading system, consumers have another option available to them: beef that has undergone certification. This program, overseen by the USDA, certifies that the beef bearing this designation is from a particular breed or variety. The most common breed certification is for beef from Angus steer and heifers, which have consistently demonstrated a predisposition for developing well-marbled meat.

Steak lovers on a budget should remember that they'll get tastier results using lesser cuts (top round or flank steak, for example) graded prime or choice than they will with higher-end cuts (like rib eye or porterhouse) graded select. Note that most beef from naturally raised, grass-fed animals is sold ungraded, as its quality can't be judged by the same standards that apply to commercial beef. —Dana Bowen

METHOD

Entrecôtes au Poivre Vert

(Strip Steaks with Green Peppercorn Sauce)

The recipe for this dish (facing page) is based on one in *Glorious French Food* by our friend James Peterson (Wiley, 2002). "Strictly speaking," writes Peterson, "an entrecôte is a boneless rib steak...but nowadays, in good places at least, [it's] a contre-filet (what in New York is called a strip steak)." Season four 1"-thick strip steaks (about 2½ lbs. in all; see page 60) with salt to taste on a plate, cover, and refrigerate for 2 hours. Remove steaks from refrigerator and set aside at room temperature to let rest for 1 hour. Heat 1 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Pat steaks dry; add 2 to skillet. Cook, flipping once, until well browned and medium rare, 4–5 minutes in all. Transfer steaks to a plate and tent with foil; set aside in a warm oven. Repeat with remaining steaks. Remove skillet from heat and add 2 finely chopped shallots; stir until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Add 1½ cups ruby port; bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Cook until mixture is reduced to about ¼ cup, 5–6 minutes. Add 2 cups beef stock; boil until syrupy, 10–12 minutes. Remove skillet from heat; whisk in 1 cup heavy cream. Return skillet to medium heat; boil gently until thickened, 6–8 minutes. Stir in ¼ cup rinsed and coarsely chopped brine-cured green peppercorns, 2 tsp. white wine vinegar, and salt to taste. Pour sauce over steaks. Serves 4.

There are as many opinions on the best way to cook a steak as there are men in spattered aprons clutching tongs on the Fourth of July



there are as many opinions on the matter as there are men in spattered aprons clutching tongs on the Fourth of July. It seems that everyone, Saturday night grillers and full-time epicures alike, has a time-honored secret for turning out the perfect steak.

Most of us agree on a few basic principles, though. First, time is of the essence: steaks generally cook fast (especially grass-fed beef, which is leaner), so it is important to know when to stop cooking, whether you are using a charcoal grill, a broiler, or a cast-iron skillet (see “Is It Done Yet?,” page 50). Second, a nicely but not overly charred exterior is essential—not for sealing in the juices (which, because of beef’s permeable cell structure, is not really possible) but for achieving the toasty, caramelized flavors that are produced when direct heat meets fat and flesh. Scientists call this alchemical transformation—when heat converts amino acids and sugars into hundreds of flavor compounds—the Maillard reaction; cooks usually just call it browning. However you refer to it, this is the

process that makes the well-seasoned crust of a perfectly seared steak one of the tastiest things in the world.

As has happened with all great American foods, steak has been adapted to the culinary traditions of our own regional cultures and of those beyond our borders—from the classic French preparation of a strip steak, or *entrecôte*, served with a green peppercorn sauce, to the South’s beloved chicken-fried steak and intensely flavorful dishes like the Vietnamese-style steak known as *thit bò bít tết*. I love all these foods, and yet, every time I cut into a thick steak, crusted on the outside and as pink as a baby’s cheek within, I still think of cowboys, strong coffee, and dark nights full of stars. Having watched a few modern-day cowboys herd cattle across the open pastures of Montana, I take pleasure in knowing that steak, the quintessentially American food, has made a return to its home on the range.

THE PANTRY, page 96: Sources for grass-finished and prime dry-aged steaks. For additional steak recipes, go to www.saveur.com/steak.

METHOD

Steak House-Style Porterhouse

A steak house steak, like the porterhouse shown on the facing page, has a crusty, deeply browned exterior—a finish executed by means of intensely hot grills or broilers whose temperatures sometimes reach 800°. Here’s how to achieve the same result at home. Place a 2"-thick prime dry-aged porterhouse steak (about 3 lbs.; see page 61) on a plate and allow it to come to room temperature for 1 hour. Heat oven to 500°. Open all your windows, readying your kitchen for quite a bit of smoke. Heat a large cast-iron skillet over high heat until very hot, 6–8 minutes. Rub steak all over with 2 tbsp. canola oil, then season generously on all sides with coarse salt and coarsely ground black pepper. Add 1 tbsp. canola oil to skillet and carefully add steak. Cook, without turning, until deeply browned and crusty. When you’re cooking a steak at home, it’s nearly impossible to brown both sides sufficiently and still cook it to medium rare, so make sure you cook the first side (the presentation side) until it has a charcoal-like crust, about 7–8 minutes. Flip steak and cook until browned on second side, 2–3 minutes more. Transfer skillet to oven and roast until medium rare, 6–8 minutes. Transfer steak to a rack over a tray, top with 2 tbsp. butter cut into thin slices, and tent loosely with foil. Set steak aside to let rest for 5–10 minutes, then transfer to a cutting board. (Hold on to the buttery juices that have collected on the tray.) Following the contour of the bones, cut the filet off one side of the steak and the top loin off the other. Working on the bias, slice both pieces of meat into 1/2"-thick slices, keeping slices together as you go. Reassemble the steak on a platter along with bone, fanning out steak slices slightly. Pour reserved juices over meat. Serves 2.



THE CUTTING EDGE

ONE OF THE BEST THINGS about ordering a steak when we’re dining out is the moment when the waiter replaces our table knife with a sharp steak knife; it evokes in us an almost Pavlovian response, subtly announcing that a big slab of beef is on its way. It turns out that this purpose-made piece of tableware is a relatively recent innovation in this country.

Until a century or so ago in America, the steak knife was the tool of butchers alone; the name usually referred to a large, curved blade used to cut meat into thick, uniform slices. It wasn’t until the early part of the 20th century that a slim-bladed, steak-specific piece of cutlery began to appear on the tables of the wealthy, where a profusion of specialized utensils was considered a sign of status. Around 1911, a catalogue from the Connecticut-based company Landers, Frary & Clark introduced a steak knife for the table.

By midcentury, other cutlery makers had begun selling knives in sets, marketing them as indispensable to any well-laid American table. In 1947, the Oregon-based knife maker Gerber started offering boxed sets of steak knives, derived from meat carvers, that sold well at upscale jewelry shops and as wedding gifts; in 1954, salesmen from the Cutco company of Olean, New York, began including steak knives in the cutlery sets they peddled door to door. By the 1950s, a set of quality steak knives was deemed an essential component of the atomic-age American home.

New designs and styles proliferated; in the 1950s and ’60s, for example, imported German steak knives, complete with rustic stag-antler handles, were all the rage. Also, the introduction of stainless steel, which in the 1920s had begun to replace carbon steel in the manufacture of knives, meant that blades gleamed brighter and got sharpened less frequently. That in turn helped boost the popularity of the serrated edge, now common on mass-market steak knives. (See THE PANTRY, page 96, for a source for steak knives.) —Bernard Levine, author of *The Knifemakers of Old San Francisco* (Badger Books, 1978)

With its toasty, caramelized flavors, the well-seasoned crust of a perfectly seared steak is, quite simply, one of the tastiest things in the world





Southern Heat

FIRE AND SPICE DEFINE THE FOODS OF THAILAND'S DEEP SOUTH

Story and Photographs by James Oseland

SOUTHERN THAILAND

THE COOK AT THE BIG BOOM street food stall—a woman in her 40s whose straight, black hair was artfully tucked underneath her hairnet—was studying me from behind the counter. Thwacking a lemongrass stalk with the flat side of a cleaver, she asked, in English, “You want to look?”

I was in Thale Noi, a sunbaked fishing village in the province of Phatthalung in southern Thailand, and I had just placed an order for tom yum goong, a soup under whose spell I had fallen in a San Francisco Thai restaurant as a teenager. A good rendition of it—whole shrimp or prawns in a sweet-sour-hot-citrusy broth—is like liquid joy.

But that was not the only reason I had ordered it. Tom yum goong, which is eaten throughout Thailand, expresses the culinary temperament of the place where it was cooked better than any other Thai dish I can think of. The versions I’ve tasted in the central part of the country, which includes Bangkok, have usually been made with lots of nam tan, a golden, semimoist variety of sugar derived from a local genus of sugar palm—a clear reflection of the region’s love for sweet-tasting foods. Conversely, the tom yum goong I’ve had in Isan, as northeastern Thailand is known, was intensely pungent, as the cooks there use chiles with reckless abandon. The cuisine of the southern part of the country was mostly a mystery to me; I was eager to find out what its tom yum goong would taste like.

I joined the cook on her side of the counter and watched as she pared away the bright pink shoots emerging from a piece of galangal (a knobby, firm-fleshed rhizome closely related to ginger) and then sliced the ingredient into thin rounds that gave off a bracing, piney scent. As she worked, she told me that her name was Pornpitlum Pattcha and that she and her husband had opened up the stall a few years earlier.

“Usually we just have one or two curries, a noodle dish, and rice, always rice,” she explained. “You want peht?”

“Peht,” I said under my breath. It was not one of the Thai words my jetlag-addled brain could recall. Pattcha held up a handful of small red chiles and smiled.

“Yes—peht. Peht!” I said, my memory jogged. “I *do* want it hot. Very hot!”

Pattcha stemmed the chiles and slit them in two and then did the same with the lemongrass stalk that she’d smashed just a few minutes earlier. She placed the galangal and lemongrass, along with eight crumpled kaffir lime leaves and two garlic cloves, into a pot half filled with water. After briefly simmering these ingredients (“I know it is finished because the smell is good,” she said), Pattcha added the chiles and five prawns, which she had also halved lengthwise. When the prawns had begun to turn opaque, she added a few spoonfuls of nam tan, several quartered plum tomatoes, a spurt of fish sauce, and fresh lime juice. She stirred everything together for a moment, tasted it, and then, with a quick nod, pronounced the soup done. She handed me a spoon.

Though the tom yum goong had been simple to prepare, it tasted miraculously complex. The subtle broth allowed the warm flavors of the chile, lemongrass, and galangal to come through like rays of sunshine on a cloudy day, and the prawns were as sweet as candy. Within minutes, I had slurped down an entire bowl. Sweat pouring from my brow, I asked Pattcha for another.

I DECIDED TO VISIT THAILAND’S southern provinces to satisfy a curiosity that I’ve harbored since 1983, when I first passed through the region on an overnight train traveling from Bangkok to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. I still remember looking out the window at daybreak and beholding a countryside that was green and alive. Rice paddies stretched into the distance like squares on a chessboard, their flatness broken only by limestone formations that jutted up at random. It was a postcard vision of Southeast Asia. The train chugged along, stopping in towns with exotic-sounding names: Surat Thani, Ban Na Sam, Thung Song.

I was famished by the time we arrived in Phatthalung, the small capital city of the province of the same name (in which Thale Noi is also located). I asked the conductor how long it would be before the train pulled out of the station; at least 20 minutes, he told me. I could make out the edges of an open-air market, so I walked toward it, hoping to find something good to eat.

Soon I encountered a compact maze of at least 50 vendors offering prepared food. It was hard to know where to begin. I saw pots full of luscious-looking curries, noodle soups seasoned with ginger and pork bones, and alluring rice dishes that looked only distantly related to the Thai food I had previously known. I stopped at a stall operated by an elderly woman and ordered a rice salad,

METHOD

Tom Yum Goong

(Sweet and Sour Prawn Soup)

Pornpitlum Pattcha’s version of this dish was made with large saltwater prawns known in Thai as goong yai. For a source for hard-to-find ingredients, see **THE PANTRY**, page 96. Bring 1 quart water to a boil in a large pot. Add 8 whole fresh or frozen kaffir lime leaves, 2 crushed cloves garlic, 1 trimmed stalk lemongrass halved lengthwise, and one 3” piece peeled fresh or frozen galangal cut crosswise into 1/4”-thick coins. Reduce heat to medium and cook until fragrant, 3–4 minutes. Add 5 head-on, shell-on jumbo prawns, halved lengthwise, and boil gently until just cooked through, about 30 seconds. Add 3/4 cup fresh lime juice, 1/4 cup fish sauce, 3–4 tbsp. semimoist thai palm sugar (see page 92), 5 red or green thai chiles, stemmed and halved lengthwise, 2 cored and quartered plum tomatoes, and salt to taste. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer until tomatoes are softened, 4–5 minutes. Transfer to a serving bowl and top with 1/2 cup roughly chopped fresh cilantro. Serve immediately with steamed jasmine rice. Serves 4.

Tom yum goong, facing page. Previous pages: left, thai chiles; right, a bridge in Thale Noi.





SOUTHERN THAILAND



which she said was called kao yum, and something that resembled chicken biriyani.

"It is kao mok gai," she told me, "spicy chicken rice. You will like it."

She was right. Back on the train, I devoured both dishes. The kao yum was flavored with toasted, grated coconut and finely julienned lemongrass and kaffir lime leaves; it was a riot of fragrance and texture. The kao mok gai contained cumin and coriander, and it was served with a few cooling slices of cucumber; though its roots were probably Indian or Middle Eastern, its gracefulness was utterly Thai.

I reached the Malaysian border later that afternoon, but my brief exposure to Thailand's south had given me a taste of how radically different that area is from other parts of the country.

PAHK TAI, AS THE SOUTHERN REGION is called in Thai, is a narrow peninsula connected to the country's mainland by the Isthmus of Kra, a finger of land that borders Myanmar. To the west of pahk tai is the Indian Ocean, and to the east is the South China Sea. As the sea is a pervasive presence—the region's cities all lie within an hour's drive of the coasts—fishing and maritime trade have defined its economy since ancient times. And, like many of the world's maritime locales, it became a repository of the cuisines and traditions of the different cultures that called at its ports and wielded influence over the years.

Early in southern Thailand's recorded history, start-

ing in the seventh century, the Hindu trading empire of Srivijaya, based in southern Sumatra (part of present-day Indonesia), controlled its waters; both Indian and Chinese ships sailed through them. After the decline of Srivijaya's influence, in the 13th century, Muslim sultanates, many of which were based in what is now Malaysia, rose to power. Their authority was shared with the Buddhist city-state of Nakhon Si Thammarat, located on the eastern coast, which developed around the same time. Today, most of the residents of the southernmost provinces—Narathiwat, Pattani, Songkhla, and

A field near Thale Noi, in Phatthalung Province, in southern Thailand, above. Facing page, fern curry with shrimp.

METHOD

Yum Pak Grood

(Fern Curry with Shrimp)

This spare though luscious dish is traditionally made with pak grood—young, wild ferns that grow in the jungles of southern Thailand. Fiddlehead ferns make an ideal substitute. Bring a pot of water to a boil. Add 3 cups (about 1/2 lb.) fresh or thawed frozen fiddlehead ferns (see page 96), reduce heat to medium, and cook until just tender, 2–3 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer ferns to a bowl and set aside; return water to a boil. Add 8 large shell-on shrimp (about 1/2 lb.), reduce heat to medium, and boil gently until almost cooked through, about 1 minute; drain. When cool enough to handle, peel and devein shrimp; set aside. Combine 1 cup well-stirred coconut milk and 1/3 cup water in a medium pot. Bring just to a boil, add reserved ferns, reduce heat to medium-low, and simmer until softened, 3–5 minutes. Add reserved shrimp, 2 1/2 tbsp. fresh lime juice, 1 1/2 tsp. sugar, 3 stemmed and thinly sliced red thai chiles, 2 thinly sliced shallots, and salt to taste. Cook until shallots are softened, about 2 minutes. Ladle curry over steamed jasmine rice. Serves 4.

SOUTHERN THAILAND



From left, long beans and galangal; Pom, a cook in Phatthalung; just-grilled mackerel; mee teow.

Yala—are Muslim, and many of them, citing discrimination born of centuries of political and cultural domination by northern Thais, have separatist leanings. The politically charged atmosphere has frequently led to violence. However, in the provinces just to the north—including Phatthalung, Trang, and the popular beach resort destinations of Krabi and Phuket—the population is mostly Buddhist, and the area has remained largely peaceful.

Regardless of political and religious allegiances, one thing binds all *khon thai*—as southerners are collectively called—together: the sense that they are not only physically separate but also culturally distinct from their northern neighbors. They speak Pasah Dai, a Thai dialect, and Yawi, an ancient Malay language. The methods they use to build their houses traditionally have been more similar to those used in Malaysia than to those used in the other regions of Thailand. And the vibrant foods they cook convey a subtle multi-

culturalism that sets them apart from the rest of country.

For instance, gaeng mussamun (Muslim curry), a popular coconut milk-based curry, uses an abundance of dried spices (including cumin, coriander, and black pepper) more commonly found in the cuisines of India and Indonesia than in that of Thailand. Gaeng som, a currylike dish with fish, pineapple, fresh turmeric, and gapi (Thai shrimp paste), has a sweet-sour interplay that immediately calls to mind the foods of Malaysia and of Singapore's Peranakans, a Malay-Chinese cultural group celebrated for its cuisine.

Although southern Thailand's dishes run the gamut from refreshing salads to slow-cooked stews, one overarching rule seems to define them: they always exhibit a refined balance of hot, sour, and sweet, with no single element overwhelming the others.

A FEW DAYS AFTER I HAD EATEN Pattcha's tom yum goong, I was strolling through Phatthalung, happy to be

SOUTHERN THAILAND



back two decades later in this sleepy city for longer than a whistle-stop. It was dusk, and the neon pink sky reflected onto Khao Ok Thalu, the immense limestone outcropping that rises in the center of town like an otherworldly skyscraper. My companion that day was Apai Kongmanon, a soft-spoken radio journalist in his 60s whom I had met by way of the local tourism office. I had been told that Kongmanon, who grew up in this city, considers himself an arbiter of old-guard southern Thai culture and could explain its foodways better than anyone else around. As we walked, he talked about a southern Thai style of classical dance called *manobra buchayan*, one of his passions.

"It is from the days of Srivijaya—and from when Indian spice merchants were in our ports," he said. "It is from the past, but it is fundamentally Thai!" For dramatic emphasis, he came to a standstill and arched his left hand above his head in a classical-dance pose. At that moment, two women passed by and gave Kongmanon the respectful Thai greeting known

METHOD

Mee Teow

(Stir-Fried Rice Vermicelli with Black Pepper and Chinese Chives)

Bring a medium pot of water to a boil. Add 5 oz. rice vermicelli noodles (see page 96); press down to submerge noodles. Immediately cover pot and turn off heat; let rest for 3 minutes. Drain noodles, rinse well in cold water, and drain again. Cut noodles in half and spread them out on a paper towel-lined sheet tray and set aside to let dry slightly, 2–3 minutes. Meanwhile, heat 4 tsp. peanut oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Add 2 roughly chopped cloves garlic and cook until golden, about 30 seconds. Add 30 trimmed Chinese chives cut into 2½" pieces (about 2 cups) and cook until just softened, about 30 seconds. Reduce heat to medium-low, add 2 cups mung bean sprouts, 1 tbsp. soy sauce, 2 tsp. shaoxing jiu (Chinese rice wine; see page 96), 2 tsp. freshly ground black pepper, salt to taste, and reserved noodles, and toss together. Cook until chives are wilted, about 1 minute more. Serve at once. Serves 4.



SOUTHERN THAILAND

as a *wai* (head bowed, hands brought to a prayer position at the forehead). He returned the *wai* and then whispered to me, “Everyone here is familiar with my eccentricities.”

I explained that I wanted to revisit the market near the train station—the one that I had known from my previous visit. Kongmanon said that wouldn’t be possible; it had already closed for the day. But he had something even better in mind. “I will show you where we eat at night,” he said.

Soon, we were on Yud Tee Tam Road, a ten-minute walk away. On both sides of a two-block-long stretch of the street were merchants who had set up wooden food stalls. Kongmanon grabbed my elbow and guided me into the crowd. “We have only a few restaurants in Phatthalung,” he said. “People come to this night market to get their dinner.”

I was familiar with the concept of outdoor night markets from my years of traveling in Southeast Asia; they allow people the pleasure of food shopping in the evening hours, when the heat of the day has eased. But I had never encountered one that was so focused on prepared foods rather than raw ingredients. We stopped at a stall whose display was particularly appealing. Kongmanon pointed out a few highlights.

“That is yum pak grood,” he said, indicating a large enamel tureen brimming with a deep green-colored curry made of young, wild ferns and whole, peeled shrimp. Next to it were a few grilled mackerel, naked except for salt, and an arrangement of uncooked leaves and herbs, including cashew and tamarind leaves, that had been tied into pretty bundles. The latter—called, collectively, *pak naem*, Kongmanon told me—were meant to be nibbled on judiciously at meals to contrib-

ute extra exuberance, bitterness, or sourness, depending on the leaf.

We departed from the night market and drove out of town for a few miles, stopping at a no-name food stall on the side of a little-traveled road. It was empty save for the cook who was manning it, a young man named Pom, an acquaintance of Kongmanon’s. As we chatted, Pom prepared another local dish that Kongmanon wanted me to taste, this one called yum takrai—a salad of finely sliced lemongrass, shallots, and dried shrimp—to go with our fern curry with shrimp. Soon the three of us were eating, accompanied only by



Cutting Lemongrass **1** Trim about one and a half inches off of the root end of a stalk of lemongrass; trim off enough of the stalk’s dry, scraggly top that you’re left with a four- to five-inch piece of lemongrass. **2** Peel off and discard the rough outer layers of the lemongrass so that only the tender, pale yellow and lilac ones in the core (the most flavorful part) remain. **3** Thinly slice lemongrass crosswise into thin rings to make the spicy lemongrass salad (below, left) or to grind up in spice pastes. —Liz Pearson

METHOD

Yum Takrai

(Spicy Lemongrass Salad)

Although many of us in the West assume that lemongrass must be cooked before it’s eaten, cooks in southern Thailand adore its crunchy texture and intensely citrusy flavor. Pom, the cook in Phatthalung who gave us this recipe, sometimes uses dried whole anchovies (known in Thai as *pla kem*) when he makes this vibrant salad. We found this dish to be perfectly satisfying without them. For a source for hard-to-find ingredients, see THE PANTRY, page 96. Trim and slice 15 stalks fresh lemongrass according to “Cutting Lemongrass” (above, right). Transfer lemongrass slices to a medium bowl; separate rings with your fingers. Add 1/4 cup finely chopped ginger, 2 tbsp. toasted cashews, 2 tbsp. whole dried shrimp (see page 91), 1 1/2 tbsp. fish sauce, 1 1/2 tbsp. fresh lime juice, 1 1/2 tbsp. sugar, 1 tbsp. finely ground whole dried shrimp, 4–6 stemmed and thinly sliced red Thai chiles, and 2 shallots very thinly sliced lengthwise and toss well. Garnish with 3 raw stemmed long beans that have been cut into 4” pieces. Serve with steamed jasmine rice. Serves 4.

the hum of the fluorescent light that hung overhead. After a while, Kongmanon broke the silence. “In this food,” he said, “you can taste my home.”

THOUGH THE NEXT STOP ON MY journey was just an hour away by car, it seemed to be a world apart. Trang, a city of 68,000 people, was a bustling regional center of wide boulevards and traffic lights that actually worked (an uncommon state of affairs, I’d found, in Phatthalung). There was even a large, comfy hotel—the kind of anonymous, “international class” establishment that felt as if it could be in suburban Chicago or, just as easily, near the Cairo international airport. I checked in and sank into the first plush bed I’d seen in a week. After waking up from a long nap, I made my way outside into the afternoon heat to find out more about Trang.

Everywhere I looked there was evidence of the city’s vibrancy, a dividend of its centuries-old history as a trading center. Jewelry shops and banks competed for space with cafés selling snacks and *ko-pi boran*—strong black coffee enriched with sweetened condensed milk. Much

of the signage was in Chinese, evidence of Trang's sizable population of Hokkien, a southern Chinese ethnic group long settled in Southeast Asia. I ducked into a nondescript restaurant along a busy street. When the non-English-speaking waiter inquired what I wanted to order, I hesitated, uncertain as to what the local specialties were. Then, remembering a lesson from my travels, I took a gamble and pointed to the table next to me.

A few minutes later, my meal—a steaming platter of stir-fried rice vermicelli with Chinese chives—was placed in front of me. At first glance it seemed more like a subtle Chinese dish than a bold southern Thai one. Then I tasted it. Lip-curlingly pungent and delicious, it had been seasoned with garlic and an eye-popping amount of finely ground black pepper. It was southern Thai, through and through. 

THE PANTRY, page 96: *Sources for kaffir lime leaves, galangal, fish sauce, thai palm sugar, fiddlehead ferns, rice vermicelli, Chinese rice wine, and dried shrimp.*

RECIPE

Kao Mok Gai

(Thai-Style Chicken Biryani)

SERVES 4-6

Although this dish is traditionally made with a whole, cut-up chicken, we've found that thighs and drumsticks work just as well. This recipe is an adaptation of one in Nancie McDermott's seminal cookbook *Real Thai* (Chronicle Books, 1992).

- 1½ tbsp. ground coriander
- 2 tsp. ground cumin
- 1 tsp. ground turmeric
- ½ tsp. freshly ground white pepper
- 6 shallots, roughly chopped
- 5 cloves garlic
- 1 5" piece fresh peeled ginger, roughly chopped
- Salt
- 6 skinless chicken thighs, halved crosswise through the bone
- 6 skinless chicken drumsticks
- 2 tbsp. peanut oil
- 2½ cups jasmine rice
- 2 Kirby cucumbers, trimmed and thinly sliced
- Thai-style chile sauce, such as Sriracha

1. In a blender, combine coriander, cumin, turmeric, pepper, shallots, garlic, ginger, 1 tsp. salt, and ⅓ cup water; purée to a paste. Toss chicken and spice paste together in a large bowl to coat. Cover with plastic wrap and set aside at room temperature to let marinate for 1 hour.

2. Heat oil in a large wide pot over medium-high heat. Add chicken and all the spice paste and cook, stirring occasionally, until paste is deeply caramelized and chicken is just beginning to brown, 12-14 minutes.

3. Add rice and cook, stirring occasionally, for 1-2 minutes. Add salt to taste and 2¼ cups water; bring to a boil while stirring occasionally. Cover pot, reduce heat to medium-low, and simmer until rice is just tender and chicken is cooked through, about 30 minutes. Remove pot from heat and let sit undisturbed for 15 minutes. Uncover and, using a fork, gently toss together the chicken and rice. Serve immediately with cucumbers and chile sauce on the side.





THE GUIDE

SOUTHERN THAILAND

COUNTRY CODE: 66

EXCHANGE RATE: 33 bahts = \$1

Dinner with drinks and tip:
INEXPENSIVE Under \$15

There are no direct flights into southern Thailand from the United States. However, many airlines do fly from the U.S. directly to Bangkok, where connecting flights to the south's major cities are available. Hiring a car and driver will make traveling in southern Thailand easier. For help, contact Phuket Jet Tour in Phuket (76 25 9240; fax 76 21 6799; www.phuketjettour.com) or the Tourism Authority of Thailand (www.tourismthailand.org).

WHERE TO STAY

RAYAVADEE 214 Moo 2, Tambol Aonang, Amphur Muang, Krabi (75 62 07403; fax 75 62 0630; www.rayavadee.com). Rates: \$515–\$4,545. Of the hundreds of luxury hotels that dot the coasts of southern Thailand, this is among our favorites (though it's about a 90-minute drive from Trang and a two-hour one from Phatthalung). The hotel's 104 rooms epitomize Thai elegance, and the lush environs—the property is situated within the Krabi Marine National Park—couldn't be more stunning.

THUMRIN THANA HOTEL 69/8 Thanon Huayyod, Tambon Tubtiang, Trang (75 21 1211; fax 75 22 3288; www.thumrin.co.th). Rates: rooms \$36–\$1,212. Although this establishment has all the personality of a corporate-hotel chain, the 290 rooms—the best in Trang—are uniformly pleasant (and the room-service tom yum goong reminds you that you're not in Cleveland).

WHERE TO EAT

JAY ONE RESTAURANT 53 Thanon Rama IV, Trang (5:00 P.M.–midnight). *Inexpensive.* This eatery is the place to go

in Trang for mee teow, rice vermicelli stir-fried with black pepper and chinese chives. Be sure to try also the ko-pi boran, Trang's take on coffee, served with sweetened condensed milk.

SEE FAR RESTAURANT 37 Thanon Phatthalung, Trang (10:30 A.M.–10:00 P.M.). *Inexpensive.* An attractive Trang restaurant where it's possible to sample a range of southern favorites, from gaeng tai pla (pork curry with black pepper) to yum takrai (spicy lemongrass salad).

YUD TEE TAM ROAD NIGHT MARKET Thanon Yud Tee Tam, Phatthalung (4:00–7:00 P.M.). More than 30 vendors appear every night of the week on this Phatthalung side street to offer an impressive array of ready-to-eat southern-style foods.



MAP BY OLIVER WILLIAMS





Dinners with Édith

A summer visit to an old family friend on Île de Ré is a refresher course in the French art of eating and drinking

BY DAVID McANINCH PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANDRÉ BARANOWSKI AND JOE PATRONITE

LEFT: ANDRÉ BARANOWSKI; RIGHT: MICHAEL KRAUS; INSET RIGHT: JOE PATRONITE

A boudin blanc and pear salad with pine nuts, facing page. Above, the author and Édith Lanthiez-Soyez in the backyard garden of her home.

FRENCH HOME COOK

TWO WOMEN NURTURED MY LOVE of food when I was a young man: my mom, who persuaded me to go out into the world, try new things, and always keep an open mind, and Édith Lanthiez-Soyez, who taught me that an open mind is fine as long as you don't fill it with the wrong ideas. With my mom's encouragement, I decided to move to France to broaden my horizons, and after I arrived, Édith was there to make sure I broadened them only in the proper direction. On my return to the

States, I brought with me a passion for French cooking and, thanks to Édith, a respect for the art of the French table. The advice of both of these women has long served me well. Lately, though, my thoughts have drifted back to the days I spent under the tutelage of Édith, who played a vital role in my culinary coming-of-age.

I first met Édith in 1986, when she came over from France to collect her 18-year-old son Eric, who had spent a month as an exchange student living with my family in suburban Chicago. A sturdy woman who spoke halting English in a gravelly voice, she was, and is, an exemplar of old-line French beliefs about eating and drinking. Raised in Cambrai, a city in the country's industrial north, she seldom dispensed flattery, and she spoke her mind plainly.

One evening during her visit, when my dad opened a California chablis with a flourish at dinner and served some to Édith, she took a perfunctory sip and announced, "Zees ees a funny little wine." When we took her to the fanciest restaurant in town, she seemed nonplussed at having to leave the table to smoke and was visibly disappointed at what was offered as coffee. Yet, the next evening, when my dad tossed a few rib eyes on the backyard barbecue and—having given up on wine—served Édith bourbon on the rocks, she ate and drank with gusto, quizzing my dad about every element of the meal, right down to the composition of the charcoal briquettes. She returned to France the next day with her son, four bottles of Wild Turkey, and a full-size Weber kettle grill.

It wasn't until I moved to Paris after college to work as a teacher that I really got to know Édith. I lived in a silverfish-infested studio in Montmartre, and my diet consisted largely of ba-

guettes and street stall kebabs. My only respites from bachelor life were my repeated trips—at Édith's invitation—to the house in Beauvais, an hour north of Paris, that she shared with her psychiatrist husband, Luc; Eric; and their two other sons, Jérôme and Thibault.

The menu for those weekend dinners, which often didn't wind down until midnight, consisted of a repertoire of perfectly executed French classics like steak tartare and pot-au-feu, the one-pot dish of beef and vegetables simmered in broth. She eschewed supermarkets—I often accompanied her to the butcher's or the fishmonger's, where she'd introduce me jokingly as her "American son"—and I only rarely saw her glance at a recipe.

In the decade and a half after my return from France, I went to graduate school, moved to New York, and got married. And though I've eaten more ambitious meals than those Édith prepared for me, I can honestly say I've never eaten better. I decided it was time pay a return visit to my old friend and mentor, this time with my wife of five years, Michele, who has known Édith only from old photos and my oft told stories.

THESE DAYS ÉDITH lives by herself in a tile-roofed bungalow on Île de Ré, a beach-fringed island off France's western coast, where she and her family spent summers (she separated from Luc, who remained in Beauvais, more than a decade ago), but thanks to her three married sons and five grandchildren, she's rarely alone. When Michele and I arrive on a hot July afternoon, there's already a full house: in attendance are Eric, his wife, Florence, and their seven-month-old son, Arthur, as well as Véronique, the wife of Édith's son Jérôme, and their two children, four-year-

METHOD

Salade aux Poires et Boudin Blanc

(Pear and Boudin Salad)

Boudin blanc is a smooth, delicately spiced sausage made from veal, chicken, or pork and, sometimes, milk, eggs, and bread crumbs. (A good substitute would be weisswurst.) Whisk together 2 tsp. balsamic vinegar, 2 tsp. red wine vinegar, 1 tsp. dijon mustard, and salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste in a small bowl. While whisking constantly, drizzle in 3 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil to form a smooth vinaigrette; set aside. Melt 2 tbsp. butter in a large skillet over medium heat. Add 4 links boudin blanc sausages (see page 96) and cook, turning occasionally, until deep golden brown all over and cooked through, 10–12 minutes. Transfer sausages to a paper towel-lined plate and set aside to let cool slightly. Meanwhile, peel, core, and thinly slice 1 ripe bartlett pear; set aside. Put torn leaves of 1 large head escarole into a large bowl, toss with the reserved vinaigrette, and transfer to a large platter. Thickly slice the boudin blanc on the bias and arrange over the escarole. Fan out pear slices and arrange on both ends of the platter. Sprinkle with 2 tbsp. toasted pine nuts and serve immediately. Serves 4.

Rouleaux de Concombre et Saumon

(Cucumber and Salmon Rolls)

When making these appetizers (facing page), try to use the thinnest-cut smoked salmon you can find; you should almost be able to see through it. Thickly sliced salmon will make the rolls too fat. Stir together 6 oz. softened goat cheese, 5 finely chopped large mint leaves, 1 finely chopped clove garlic, and salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste in a medium bowl; set aside. Trim the ends off of 1 long English cucumber, then halve crosswise. Cut each cucumber half lengthwise into 8 thin flexible slices. Cut 1/4 lb. very thinly sliced smoked salmon into sixteen 1" x 6" pieces. Lay 1 piece salmon lengthwise atop a cucumber slice, then dollop about 1 tbsp. of the goat cheese mixture on one end. Starting at the goat cheese end, roll up the salmon and cucumber completely and secure with a toothpick; transfer to a large platter. Repeat process to make 16 rolls in all. Garnish platter with cherry tomatoes. Serve immediately. Makes 16.



FRENCH HOME COOK

old Oscar and two-year-old Faustine, who are gamboling naked around the backyard.

I greet Eric and Édith with hugs and then introduce Michele, who admitted to me on the flight over how nervous she was about meeting this formidable figure from my past. Édith seems hardly to have aged in the eight years since I've last seen her, despite her avowed contempt for exercise and a weakness for tobacco. A half hour after we arrive, as the sun sinks behind the whitewashed walls that enclose the patio and backyard, *l'heure de l'apéritif*—cocktail hour, a rite as sacred as mass at Édith's house—begins. Édith, a cigarillo between her lips, emerges from the kitchen carrying a tray laden with glasses and bottles. I eagerly start to pour myself a kir—chilled white wine mixed with crème de cassis.

"Ah, non, David," Édith admonishes me affectionately in French, waving away a nimbus of smoke, "always add the cassis first!"

It's a warm evening, and Michele ventures to ask whether there's any rosé. Édith hops from her seat, goes inside, and returns with a cold bottle of côtes de provence, a crisp rosé from the south of France. "I always keep some around," she says matter-of-factly as Michele fills her glass, "but personally I find it to be a bastard wine."

Apéritifs are accompanied by a buttery homemade salmon mousse, and dinner is a salad of white boudin sausage, escarole, and sliced pears served with perfectly ripe cantaloupe from the Vendée, a nearby region. Édith opens a 2004 reuilly, a tart Loire Valley red that I've never seen in the States. As we settle into the rhythm of the meal, talk alternates

between the two habitual poles of French culture: politics and food.

"It's hard to find artisanal sausage like this in the States, no?" Édith asks rhetorically, brandishing a slice of boudin. Before I can answer, Eric pipes up with a comment about industrial farming, which in turn steers the banter back to politics.

"You can't believe any of what you read about our politicians," says Édith, as she reaches for more wine. "I can barely bring myself to read the papers these days."

The dialogue continues briskly along this track for the rest of the meal, with Véronique and Florence occasionally making admirable attempts to include Michele in the conversation. But by the time the cheese course—a pungent fourme d'ambert and a locally made chèvre—is served, my wife wears an expression that I've seen before at Édith's table. I suddenly remember a scene from 1991, when my dad and one of my sisters were visiting me in Paris.

Édith had invited all of us up to Beauvais for the weekend, and on Saturday night she concocted a beautiful dinner of whole roasted fish. By the time dessert was cleared away, we had gone through ten bottles of wine, my sister was asleep on the couch, and my dad's jet lag was showing as he strained to follow the chatter, which had started out gamely enough in English but kept lapsing back into French. By 11 o'clock or so, the talk was getting pretty philosophical, and Dad was starting to fade in and out of consciousness, despite my attempts to keep him involved. Suddenly, Eric turned to



Family dinner on Édith's backyard patio, above. Right, salmon and whiting terrine with herbs.



RECIPE

Terrine de Poisson

(Salmon and Whiting Terrine)

SERVES 8

Before serving this elegant terrine, remove it from the refrigerator and let it sit for 20 minutes to take the chill off. The taste will be heightened, and it will cut cleanly into slices.

- 1** tbsp. butter, softened
- 1½** lbs. skinless boneless whiting filets, coarsely ground in a food processor
- 1½** cups crème fraîche
- 3** egg whites plus 1 egg yolk, at room temperature
- Salt and freshly ground white pepper
- 2-3** ½"-thick skinless boneless salmon filets (1¼ lbs. in all)
- 1** tbsp. dijon mustard
- 6** tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 2** tsp. fresh lemon juice
- ½** tbsp. finely chopped chives
- ½** tbsp. finely chopped flat-leaf parsley

1. Heat oven to 350°. Grease 2 strips of parchment paper all over with the butter: one measuring 4" x 16" and one 5" x 9". Line a 5" x 9" x 3" loaf pan with the 4" x 16" strip, allowing ends to drape over sides of pan. Stir together whiting, crème fraîche, 2 egg whites, and salt and pepper to taste in a bowl. Line bottom of loaf pan with half the salmon, skin side up. (Cut pieces to cover bottom entirely without overlapping.) Sprinkle with salt and pepper; top with half of whiting mixture, spreading it out to edges. Repeat process with remaining salmon (cutting to fit, if necessary) and whiting mixture to create 4 layers in all. Cover with remaining paper, then foil. Set loaf pan in a deep roasting pan and pour in enough boiling water that it reaches half-way up sides of loaf pan. Bake until just cooked through (a meat thermometer should read 120° when inserted in the center), 35-40 minutes. Set terrine on a plate; let cool for 30 minutes. Using a small weight, like an unopened soup can, press gently along top of terrine to compact it. Drain off any extracted liquid (you should lose only about ½ cup). Refrigerate overnight.

2. Whisk together egg yolk and mustard in a bowl. While continuing to whisk, drizzle in oil to form a thick mayonnaise. Stir in lemon juice. In a large bowl, whisk egg white until stiff peaks form. Stir one-third of egg white into mayonnaise, then gently fold in the rest. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Transfer to a serving dish.

3. Uncover terrine and loosen its edges with a knife; invert onto a large platter. Sprinkle with chives and parsley. Slice and serve with mayonnaise.

FRENCH HOME COOK

him as if he'd been listening all along and practically shouted, in English, "And man created God!" Shortly after that, as my dad remembers it, things began to edge toward the ridiculous when Nera, the family dog, loudly passed gas. "Nera!" Édith shouted; then, reverting to her quirky English for the benefit of her guests, she said, "Zat was not indicated!"

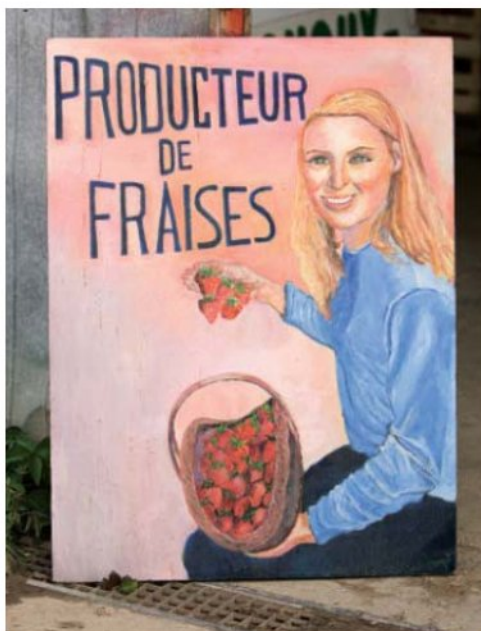
I've probably told Michele that story ten times, and as I watch her smiling politely, I can't hide my satisfaction that she's finally getting to experience a genuine Édith dinner firsthand.

"I don't think I've ever seen you eat like that," Michele says as we're getting ready for bed that night.

"You've never seen me eat at Édith's," I say, plopping down on the bed.

THE NEXT MORNING, while the daughters-in-law are at the market in the nearby town, Édith prepares the midday meal. First she makes an elegant terrine of whiting and salmon, which she bakes using a bain-marie and then puts into the fridge to let rest under a weight for a few hours. Next, working with a swift deliberateness, she assembles dainty rolls of cucumber, fresh goat cheese, mint from her garden, and smoked salmon. Afterward, as we congregate around the patio table in the shade of a huge aleppo pine, drinking toiras (a white wine made on Île de Ré) and enjoying the food, I can't imagine a meal better suited to a blazing summer day.

"Tonight," Édith tells me after lunch, "we do a terrée de moules, so be back here at seven o'clock sharp for apéros." I don't know what a terrée de moules is, but a few hours later, after Michele and I have returned from the beach, I walk out back and observe Édith pouring a sack of fresh bouchot mussels (a prized variety found along the western coast of France) onto her Weber grill (one of several she's bought since her first visit to my family, years ago) and arranging them so that they're wedged verti-



From left, a produce vendor's sign; Édith with son Eric and grandson Oscar. Facing page, grilled mussels.



cally between the grill's slats. Next, Eric hauls a burlap bag filled with dried longleaf pine needles out of the garden shed and loads heaping handfuls of the needles on top of the shellfish. Finally, after apéritifs are served, I am given the honor of touching a match to the needles, which catch instantly and send a fearsome column of flame and smoke skyward. Once the fire has subsided, we dust away the ashes and gingerly pluck the hot mussels right off the grill, pulling out the tender, smoke-tinged flesh with our fingers and popping it into our mouths.

Shellfish is the star at dinner, too: fresh oysters from the nearby Marennes-Oléron Basin and steamed langoustines served with a cold crab and rice salad. The meal, like every dinner I've had at Édith's, is unpretentious and pleasantly slow to end. Little Oscar and Faustine get chocolate pudding before they're sent off to bed. Then Édith brings out the grown-ups' dessert: a local specialty called tourteau fromager (a sweet bread

made with fresh goats' milk cheese and baked in a round earthenware mold that helps create a distinctive burnt crust) and tiny, intensely sweet mara des bois strawberries, accompanied by little glasses of pear brandy. Édith tells me that the tourteau fromager was bought at the local farm market and, on scraping the last crumbs from her plate, pronounces it "more or less correct".

It occurs to me at that moment that I have never once heard Édith weigh in on any gastronomic matter with anything less than complete certitude. And, after a few more unhurried meals at her home, I understand that this is partly what has drawn me back to her: her steadfast belief that there is a right way and a wrong way to do everything. Living as I do in New York, a city containing many bewildering opportunities for gustatory titillation, I find such certainties more comforting than restricting. But there's something else about Édith, something that happens to me when I'm at her table. During those food- and talk-filled hours, the vexations and pressures of daily existence seem to lift, and my appetite for everything that's good in life returns with vigor.

At the end of our stay, Édith bids both Michele and me a tender farewell, and she promises to visit us. On the flight home, I resolve in my mind to rise to the occasion when she does. I suppose I'll just start off with a proper kir, cassis added first, and see how it goes from there. 

METHOD

Terrée de Moules

(Grilled Mussels)

Pine needles impart a delicious, smoky tang to the mussels in a classic terrée de moules, or mussel bake, which is traditionally done on the beach. The same results (and spectacle) can be achieved by means of a standard kettle grill. If you have access to dried, pesticide-free longleaf pine needles (from a species like aleppo or umbrella), you can collect your own (make sure they're completely brown); otherwise, see page 96 for a source. Place 1½ lbs. scrubbed and bearded mussels, rounded side up, about 1"–2" apart, between the slats of the grill grate. Pile lightly packed dried pine needles atop mussels to a height of about 12". Light needles with a match; stand back. Allow needles to burn to ash, about 4–5 minutes. Dust away excess ash. Eat the mussels straight from the grill. (Discard any that are unopened.) Serves 4.

THE PANTRY, page 96: Sources for boudin blanc sausage and dried longleaf pine needles.





Create the Ultimate Backyard Oasis

Luxury outdoor living reaches its full potential with equipment from Kalamazoo, the leader in outdoor gourmet entertaining.

"...the kind of performance I normally find only in restaurant kitchens."

Michael Chiarello, Chef and NapaStyle Founder/CEO

"I may never cook indoors again."

Rick Bayless, Chef and owner Frontera Grill/Topolobampo, host of PBS's Mexico-One Plate at a Time



1.800.868.1699

KalamazooGourmet.com



IN THE SAVEUR KITCHEN

Discoveries, Stories, and Techniques from Our Favorite Room in the House » Edited by Todd Coleman



Customized Bites

PICTURE THIS: you're sitting at a Thai restaurant when the waiter arrives and sets an appetizing spread on the table in front of you. But wait—no chopsticks at the place setting? It's not an oversight.

The people of Thailand generally eat with the aid of a spoon and fork rather than with chopsticks (which are generally reserved for eating noodle-based soup dishes). The tradition dates to the late 19th century, when King Mongkut, monarch of what was then known as Siam, adopted Western-style place settings at court. (Prior to that, Thais ate with the fingers of their right hand, a practice that lives on in northern and northeastern Thailand and in many rural areas of the country.)

The spoon-and-fork method of eating (as shown by Jantina Muneekul, left, a cook in Trang, in southern Thailand, who's partaking of a plate of *kao krug gapi*, fried rice with shrimp paste) is essential to the enjoyment of a Thai family meal, whose offerings might include some sort of curry, a soup, a salad, and a stir-fry, all served alongside a communal bowl of rice. Diners hold their spoons in one hand, scooping up food and ferrying it to their mouths. The fork is used for steering food onto the spoon.

This mode of eating is an efficient way of taking charge of a meal's tastes and textures: diners can personalize each spoonful of food, pushing onto their spoons a little rice and a small taste of, say, *tom yum goong* (sweet and sour prawn soup; see page 70). We encourage you to give it a go; once you get comfortable with the technique, you may find yourself applying it to all manner of meals, Thai or otherwise.

—Naomi Duguid

KITCHEN



METHOD

Homemade Steak Sauce

Steak sauce as we know it—dark, sweet, and tangy with aromatic spices—is a British invention. In fact, A.1. Steak Sauce, the condiment of choice for many American steak lovers, was invented by Henderson William Brand, the cook to King George IV in the 1820s. This homemade variety is based on one in *Secrets of the Still* by Grace Firth (EPM, 1983). Put 1/2 cup vodka, 2 tsp. crushed whole allspice, 2 tsp. crushed cinnamon stick, and 10 crushed whole cloves into a small bowl. Cover with plastic wrap; let sit at room temperature for 8 hours. Strain vodka mixture; set aside. Put 1/2 cup red wine vinegar, 1/2 cup soy sauce, 2 tsp. hot sauce, and 4 crushed cloves garlic into a bowl; set aside. Roughly grate 4 cored and quartered medium tomatoes; discard skins. Scrape tomatoes through a sieve to make 1 cup tomato pulp; set aside. Cook 1/4 cup sugar and 6 tbsp. red wine vinegar in a skillet over medium heat, stirring constantly, to make a deep brown caramel, 6–7 minutes. Carefully stir in tomato pulp. Reduce heat to medium-low and cook until thick, 4–5 minutes. Remove and discard garlic from soy sauce mixture, then add mixture to skillet. Bring to a boil, add 1/4 cup tamarind pulp along with vodka mixture, and cook until thickened, 10–12 minutes. Refrigerate for up to 2 months. Makes about 1 cup.

LOVE ME TENDER

Imprinted with an odd-looking grid of cuts and indentations, the cube steak is a mystery of the supermarket meat case. What's the purpose of its manipulated texture, and how does it get that way in the first place? When I asked Ayoub Ahmad, the butcher at my local Met Food-market, in New York City, he took me back into his work space and started up a large metal machine with rotating teeth and blades. In went a thin-cut bottom round steak, which the blades pressed and slashed as it passed through to the other side. Then he rotated the steak 45 degrees and ran it through again. The meat emerged dotted all over with little square indentations; hence the name "cube" or "cubed". Dan Hale, a meat specialist at Texas A&M University, says that cube steak is the industry's answer to tough meat: the process gives butchers a way of transforming inexpensive cuts—usually from the lean round of a steer—into tender steaks that sell for ten to 50 cents more per pound. "The structure of meat is like the framework of a house: some of the beams are going across, some are going up," Hale said. "Cubing a steak disrupts the beams, pulling them apart, and this weakened structure makes it easier to cut or chew." Cube steaks



are sometimes known as minute steaks. A 1959 advertisement from Swift & Co., a meat packer, called them "quick to broil or pan-fry [and] particularly hearty in the heart of a bun". Ahmad is of the same mind: "If I want something fast for lunch," he says, "I put it in a sandwich." —Todd Coleman



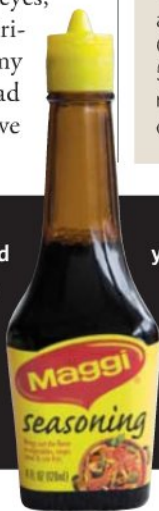
Trial by Fire

IT WAS FIVE IN THE AFTERNOON in the kitchen at Jubilee, the Pensacola Beach, Florida, restaurant where I had landed as a line cook in the early '90s. Things were about to get crazy. I piled logs of mesquite wood inside the grill and lit them with a torch. As the fire grew, I stared into the flames, wondering what in the world I had gotten myself into. A week earlier, I had noticed I was slotted on the schedule to work the grill (the busiest station) on Friday (the busiest night). That was clearly an administrative error. I had never worked the grill before. Sure, I had cooked steaks—ten, maybe 12, a night—at other, more lazily paced restaurants, but manning that station at Jubilee on a Friday, when couples were pouring into the dining room in their finest Friday duds, meant plating some 200 perfectly cooked steaks in a single six-hour shift. “There’s no mistake,” my boss said sternly. “Don’t make me come in on Saturday and clean house.”

I fretted all week. How would I keep track of all the various temperatures? Could I hold my own alongside the more seasoned crew? The regular grill cook, Rafael—a burly, mustachioed guy from New York—had never even deigned to speak to me. Obviously, they had conspired to teach me a lesson. If one steak were sent back, I’d be through.

The orders started slowly and progressed rapidly to a never ending stream. The grill was covered with filets mignons and rib eyes, which I took to tending with my bare hands. I entered a delirious, smoke-induced state, but I never fell behind and, to my amazement, not a single steak was sent back. The grill gods had smiled on me. Rafael came over with congratulations. I drove home that night a happy man. —T.C.

Liquid Magic The Maggi seasoning sauce called for in the recipe for Vietnamese-style steak (page 55) is not widely used in America, but for countless cooks across Asia and Europe it’s an indispensable flavor enhancer. Developed in the late 19th century as a soup seasoning by a Swiss entrepreneur named Julius Maggi, the sauce, which is often made of salt, wheat gluten,



SHRIMP POWER

Most of us think of shrimp as a main ingredient, not a seasoning. All over China and Southeast Asia, however, dried shrimp are used to add a briny note to a wide variety of foods. Often used whole, they are also ground into a powder for such dishes as the spicy lemongrass salad on page 77. Dried shrimp are made by salting fresh ones to extract their moisture; they are then sun-dried, which helps concentrate their flavor. Look for them at Chinese and Southeast Asian markets in plastic containers (or see page 96 for a source). They range in size from one to one and a half inches; select ones that are bright orange. We keep them for up to a year in the freezer, where they remain on call to add a burst of flavor to some of our favorite dishes. —Liz Pearson



Broiler Man

Few people know steak like Mario Navarro, the Guadalajara native who has been the chef at Gene & Georgetti, a revered Chicago steak house (see page 53), for more than 30 years. He recently shared some of his wisdom with us.

What’s the most important technique you’ve learned in three decades of cooking steaks?

We don’t season our meat. We just take really high-quality prime steak and broil it under extremely high heat. We don’t use oil or anything.

How are you able to tell when a steak is done?

After practicing all these years, I can judge a steak’s doneness with just a look. I don’t touch it the way other cooks do, to test it. Sometimes I’ll prick the steak with a fork. If it bleeds, that’s too rare.

What steak is the most popular with your customers?

Most people request filet mignon because it’s so tender. The rib eye is second in popularity, and, personally, it’s my favorite steak. Rib eyes have the flavor of the fat.

What makes Gene & Georgetti different from other steak houses?

The meat. This is the Midwest. We have the best meat in the country. I hear that there’s a place in New York called Peter Luger that people say is as good as we are, or pretty close. I have to try it someday. —Josh Ozersky

yeast, and dextrose, imparts a savory depth to many kinds of food; its flavor has been compared to that of lovage, a pungent herb that is reminiscent of wild celery and parsley. I use it in everything from marinades to pasta sauces, and some connoisseurs of Vietnamese food say that bánh mì (a Vietnamese-style charcuterie sandwich) isn’t complete without it. Is it a shortcut to flavor? Sure. That’s why I love it. —Andrea Nguyen

26TH ANNUAL WINE & FOOD FESTIVAL IN KAPALUA, MAUI



The 2007 Kapalua Wine & Food Festival, one of the longest-running festivals of its kind, will be held June 28-July 1 at the Ritz Carlton. On offer is a culinary extravaganza set amid the scenic environment of Kapalua on Maui, Hawai'i. Gourmet meals, cooking demonstrations, wine tastings and pairings, and dinners with premier vintners are just a few of the festival highlights. And don't forget all the other activities Hawai'i has to offer. For more information, visit gohawaii.com or kapalua.com.



For over 130 years, Holland America Line has been treating guests to award-winning service, intriguing onboard enrichment programs, and sophisticated five-star dining aboard spacious, elegant ships. We invite you to sail with us and enjoy the pleasures only Holland America Line delivers. Call your travel professional or 1-877-SAIL HAL, or visit www.hollandamerica.com.



KITCHEN

MORE MEAT FOR YOUR MONEY

The first-cut chuck blade steak (top right)—a composite of different muscles—is a meaty marvel, and it offers a great way to get two otherwise pricey steaks in one affordable package. Cut from the part of the shoulder closest to the rib section, first-cut chuck blade can be grilled whole; in fact, many steak lovers enjoy doing so because they get a different eating experience in every bite. But, as we learned from Merle Ellis in his book *Cutting-Up in the Kitchen* (Chronicle Books, 1975), slicing the first-cut chuck into its separate steaks at home is a money-saving option. Cut the steak along the top of the bone to remove the top blade chuck steak (near right, top). Then cut the remaining meat along the natural seam to remove the rib-eye muscle (near right, bottom). The middle muscle (near right, center) is best cut into stew meat. On average, a first-cut chuck steak costs \$2.45 per pound, whereas top blade chuck steaks and rib eyes come in at \$4.09 and \$8.48, respectively. The savings is clear. —T.C.



ANDRÉ BARANOWSKI (3)

Mr. Softie

MY FIRST ATTEMPT to cook Thai food was a disaster: I nearly sliced off a finger while shaving rock-hard palm sugar into flakes. Years later, I came across the ingredient in a soft, spoonable form; it's been a staple of mine ever since. Palm sugar, an essential ingredient in many Southeast Asian cuisines, is the boiled sap of the palm tree's immature flower stalk. Once the sap starts to flow, sugar makers collect and boil it for hours to reduce it to a syrup. For the soft variety, it's poured into containers, where it solidifies further. Its higher moisture content (due to a shorter cooking time) makes it a breeze to work with. Sold in plastic jars (see page 96), it varies in sweetness and color: the darker the hue, the more caramel-like the flavor. I no longer use palm sugar exclusively in Asian dishes; substituted for brown sugar, it also goes into a mean blondie. —Robyn Eckhardt

SAVEUR FREE INFORMATION

These SAVEUR advertisers invite you to request additional information about their products and services. Simply fill out and return the attached card. For faster service, fax toll-free to 888/847-6035 or visit www.saveur.com/freeinfo.



COOKING SCHOOLS

- 01 Le Cordon Bleu**
International students gain the knowledge and confidence to apply their skills to any style of cuisine. Earn while you learn.

CRUISES

- 02 Crystal Cruises**
- 03 Oceania Cruises**
Experience the finest cuisine at sea aboard luxurious, 684-guest ships, as you cruise to the world's most exciting destinations.

902 All in Cruises Category

CULINARY ACCESSORIES

- 04 ChefsResource.com**
The best place to buy All-Clad and other gourmet products.
- 05 Falk Culinair**
Serious cookware for serious cooks. No other cookware conducts heat more efficiently or evenly than Falk.
- 06 Gel Pro Chef's Mats**
Introducing Gel Pro Chef's Mats—finally, a kitchen floor mat designed to address the needs of the home chef. Our innovative kitchen floor mats reduce the discomfort of standing on hard kitchen flooring.
- 07 Wildfire Cutlery**
Carbon Steel Kitchen Knives from Wildfire Cutlery's Arrowbrand. Each is uniquely designed and crafted, one at a time, with a full tang and solid wood handles. Various shapes and woods available on the Web at www.wildfirecutlery.com.

903 All in Culinary Accessories Category

FINANCIAL SERVICES

- 08 Wachovia Wealth Management**
Specializing in investment management, financial planning, banking and credit, and trust and insurance services tailored to your individual needs.

KITCHEN APPLIANCES & DESIGN

- 09 Lacanche Ranges**
Lacanche, the world's finest kitchen ranges and ovens, are manufactured in the Burgundy region of France. They're enjoyed by chefs around the world, and no kitchen should be without one.
- 10 Marvel**
Luxury undercounter wine cellars, ice machines, beverage refrigerators, and more, designed for gracious living throughout the home.
- 11 Weber® Grills**
Weber, America's best-loved grill. Designing and manufacturing barbecue grills since 1952.

RESORT HOTELS

- 12 Triple Creek Ranch**
Triple Creek Ranch, Darby, Montana—a luxurious Montana hideaway in the Bitterroot Range of the Rocky Mountains.

SPECIALTY FOODS

- 13 Avocado of the Month**
Join the Avocado of the Month club and receive wonderful specials on incredible California avocados. New items include beauty products, delicious oils, gift baskets, recipes, and much more.
- 14 Avanti Savoia**
Avanti Savoia strives to bring you the very finest gourmet products from Italy, "The Best of the Best".
- 15 Hancock Gourmet Lobster**
Gourmet lobster and seafood specialties from Cundy's Harbor, Maine.
- 16 Ivory King**
Fresh and frozen seafood from Alaska and the Pacific Northwest: king and dungeness crab, king salmon, Pacific scallops, Alaskan spot shrimp, razor clams, halibut, and other seafoods on request. And, of course, our famous ivory king salmon!

- 17 Kansas City Steak Company**
Since 1932, the Kansas City Steak Company has been supplying the finest western Kansas corn-fed beef.

- 18 Stello Foods**
At Stello Foods, Inc., we specialize in the production of specialty food products. We take great pride in the production of every product that we manufacture, whether it be our own Rosie's product line or a specialty product that you would like us to produce.

910 All in Specialty Foods Category

TRAVEL DESTINATIONS

- 19 Caravan Tours**
Caravan Tours provides a great vacation at an affordable price. Our quality tours are fully escorted with sightseeing, professional tour directors, and great itineraries.

20 Mediterranean Kitchens Cooking Vacations

Mediterranean Kitchens Cooking Vacations offers an assortment of hands-on cooking programs throughout the Mediterranean region. Each of our destinations—Israel, Sicily, and Morocco—has been selected for its exciting combination of fine food and wine and warm and welcoming hosts and staff.

21 Rancho La Puerta

Opening August 2007—a million-dollar cooking school and culinary center at Rancho La Puerta, the original family-owned fitness resort and spa.

22 Travel Oregon

Travel Oregon features unique travel ideas and information that can inspire your own Oregon adventure.

23 Under the Italian Sun

Custom-designed tours of Italy for groups of any size. Let our many years of Italy travel experience make your vacation the best that it can be!

912 All in Travel Destinations Category

WINE & SPIRITS

24 Geerlings & Wade

Join our Passport Wine Club, the World Explorer, or our First Class Wine Club. These programs are designed to bring the world of wines to you and deliver them right to your doorstep!

25 Lange Winery

Lange Winery is an award-winning Oregon Vineyard, among the first to offer two styles of pinot gris. We are also known for our pinot noir and our chardonnay.

26 St. Supery Vineyards & Winery

A family-owned Napa Valley estate winery specializing in sauvignon blanc and cabernet sauvignon.

913 All in Wine & Spirits Category

SAVEUR IN STORE!

SAVEUR magazine is available in these
and other fine retail establishments.

ARTFUL GOURMET

Village Shoppes
Middleton, MA • 978/777-2228
www.artful-gourmet.com

BROADWAY PANHANDLER
New York, NY • 866/COOKWARE
www.broadwaypanhandler.com

BUON ITALIA
New York, NY • 212/633-9090
www.buonitalia.com

CLEMENTINE'S KITCHEN
Del Rey Oaks, CA • 831/392-1494
www.clementineskitchen.com

EATS GOURMET MARKETPLACE
Albany, NY • 518/453-3287
www.eatsalbany.com

ESPERANCE, LLC
Charlevoix, MI • 231/237-9300
www.esperancewine.com

FOOD & CO.
York, ME • 207/363-0900
www.foodnco.com

GOTHAM WINES
New York, NY • 212/932-0990
www.gothamwines.com

GRACE'S MARKETPLACE
New York, NY • 212/737-0600
www.gracesmarketplace.com

GRAPE VINE MARKET
Austin, TX • 512/323-5900
www.grapevinemarket.com

HARVEST MARKET
Stowe, VT • 802/253-3800
www.harvestatstowe.com

HERITAGE WINE COMPANY
Pasadena, CA • 800/630-9463
www.heritagewinecompany.com

IDEAL CHEESE SHOP
New York, NY • 800/382-0109
www.idealcheese.com

JOPPA FINE FOODS
Newburyport, MA • 978/462-4662
www.joppafinefoods.com

KARL EHMER SPECIALTY FOODS
Ridgewood, NY
800/ITS-KARL (487-5275)
www.karlehmer.com

KETCHUM KITCHENS
Ketchum, ID • 800/992-4860
www.ketchumkitchens.com

**NEW PRESTON
KITCHEN GOODS**
New Preston, CT • 860/868-1264
www.newprestonkitchengoods.com

NICOLA'S SPECIALTY FOODS
New York, NY • 212/753-9275
www.casanicola.com

OLSSON'S FINE FOODS
Lawrenceville, NJ
609/394-2798
bmerkle@comcast.net

PORCELLA URBAN MARKET
Bellevue, WA • 425/286-0080
www.porcellaurbanmarket.com

PROVISIONS
Port Townsend, WA
360/385-4541
www.provisionspt.com

QUE SYRAH FINE WINES
Chicago, IL • 773/871-8888
www.quesyrahwine.com

SALUMIERE CESARIO
Walla Walla, WA
509/529-5620
www.salumierecesario.com

TAYLOR'S MARKET
Sacramento, CA • 916/443-6881
www.taylorismarket.com

THE COOK BOOK STALL
Philadelphia, PA • 215/923-3170
thecookbookstall@hotmail.com

THE GRAND ONION
Plattsburgh, NY
518/566-6466
www.grandonion.com

THE KITCHEN TABLE
Hattiesburg, MS
601/261-2224
www.thekitchentableonline.com

THE SEAFOOD RESTAURANT
Padstow, Cornwall, England
1841 533466
www.rickstein.com

TREATS
Wiscasset, ME
207/882-6192
www.treatsofmaine.com

YOUNG'S FINE WINES
Manhasset, NY
516/627-1234
www.youngswines.com

KITCHEN

RECIPES & METHODS BY CATEGORY

APPETIZERS AND HORS D'OEUVRES

Cucumber and Salmon Rolls.....	82
Salmon and Whiting Terrine	85

SALADS

Pear and Boudin Salad	82
Spicy Lemongrass Salad.....	77

SOUPS AND STEWS

Sweet and Sour Prawn Soup	70
---------------------------------	----

MAIN DISHES

Meat and Poultry

Filets Mignons with Mushroom Sauce	50
Marinated Flank Steak	49
Steak House-Style Porterhouse	67
Strip Steaks with Green Peppercorn Sauce	65
Swiss Steak.....	55
Thai-Style Chicken Biriyani.....	78
Vietnamese-Style Steak.....	55

Seafood

Fern Curry with Shrimp	73
Grilled Mussels.....	86

Vegetarian

Stir-Fried Rice Vermicelli with Black Pepper and Chinese Chives	75
--	----

SIDE DISHES

Corn Pudding.....	21
Parsi-Style Braised Greens	24
Stir-Fried Rice Vermicelli with Black Pepper and Chinese Chives	75

DESSERTS

Madeleines.....	42
-----------------	----

MISCELLANEOUS

Homemade Steak Sauce.....	90
---------------------------	----

For information on becoming a premier retail partner,
please call Mala Mirchandani at 888/259-6753 ext. 4933



BOSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Tanglewood

LENOX, MA

Wine & Food Classic

August 9-11, 2007

**Make it a
Tanglewood Weekend!**

AUGUST 10 FRIDAY

8:30pm, Shed

*The George W. and Florence N. Adams Concert
Endowed in Perpetuity*

Boston Symphony Orchestra

James Levine, conductor

Pierre-Laurent Aimard, piano

IVES *Three Places in New England*

CARTER *Three Illusions* for orchestra

RAVEL Piano Concerto in G

BARTÓK Concerto for Orchestra

AUGUST 11 SATURDAY

8:30pm, Shed

The Evelyn and Samuel Lourie Memorial Concert

Boston Symphony Orchestra

Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos, conductor

Itzhak Perlman, violin

SCHUMANN Symphony No. 3, *Rhenish*

BRUCH Violin Concerto No. 1

STRAVINSKY Suite from *The Firebird* (1919 version)

AUGUST 12 SUNDAY

2:30pm, Shed

Boston Symphony Orchestra

Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos, conductor

Emanuel Ax, piano

Sally Matthews, soprano

Paula Murrihy, mezzo-soprano

Eric Cutler, tenor

Dietrich Henschel, bass-baritone

Tanglewood Festival Chorus,

John Oliver, conductor

MOZART Overture to *The Marriage
of Figaro*

MOZART Piano Concerto No. 9 in E-flat,
K.271, *Jeunehomme*

HAYDN *Mass in Time of War*

Sponsored by **EMC Corporation**

Concert tickets are sold separately
at (888) 266-1200 or tanglewood.org

BUS SERVICE

From Boston, New York City, and Albany

Please visit www.tanglewood.org for more
information and schedules.

*Visit with winemakers and culinary experts,
and enjoy world class food selections in the
bucolic ambiance of Tanglewood.*

Join us this summer for the 5th annual
Tanglewood Wine & Food Classic.
Festivities include a wine auction
and dinner, Thursday, August 9,
winemaker reception, Friday, August 10,
and the Grand Tasting on Saturday
from 12–4pm.



PRESENTING SPONSOR



Grand Tasting, August 11: **\$95**

Call **(888) 266-1200**, or visit www.tanglewood.org or
www.tanglewoodwineandfoodclassic.com.

For lodging information visit www.berkshires.org.

SAVEUR

LUX BOND & GREEN
JEWELRY WATCHES GIFTS SINCE 1909

HOTEL COMMONWEALTH
Lenox



BOSTON COMMON
RESTAURANT



S.PELLEGRINO
SPARKLING NATURAL MINERAL WATER

THE PANTRY

A Guide to Resources

*In producing the stories for this issue,
we discovered food products and
kitchenware too good to keep to ourselves.
Please feel free to raid our pantry!*

BY LIZ PEARSON

Fare

For excellent maraş dondurması (Turkish **ice cream**), visit the Yaşar Pastanesi pastry shop (2/E Trabzon Caddesi, Kahramanmaraş, Turkey). If you find yourself in need of a **corn cutter** for making the corn pudding, order one from Lee's Manufacturing Co. (214/728-5207; www.leemfgco.com). They're available in both hard-wood (\$9.49 each) and stainless-steel (\$12.98 each) versions, both of which work beautifully.

Kitchenwise

For details on At-Sunrice, the Singapore Culinary Academy & Spice Garden, go online to www.at-sunrice.com or call 65 6336-3307.

Cellar

For the brunello di montalcino **wines** listed in our tasting notes, contact the following: Winebow (201/445-0620) for the Altesino; Shaw Ross (954/430-5020) for the Biondi-Santi Tenuta Greppo; Folio Wine Partners (707/256-2700) for the Castel Giocondo; Banfi Vintners (800/645-6511) for the Castello Banfi Poggio Alle Mura; Banville & Jones Wine Merchants (212/268-0906) for the Donatella Cinelli Colombini; Empson (USA) Inc. (703/684-0900) for the Fuligni Riserva and the Lisini; Riviera Imports (718/937-6576) for the Il Marroneto "Madonna della Grazia"; Vias Imports Ltd. (212/269-0200) for the La Poderina; Terlato Wines International (847/604-8900) for the Il Poggione; and Kobrand Corporation (212/490-9300) for the Tenute Silvio Nardi Manachiara.

Classic

To make madeleines, purchase two 12-mold **madeleine** pans containing 3-inch-long molds (\$22.05 each) from Bridge Kitchenware (212/688-4220; www.bridgekitchenware.com).

Steak

Naturally raised grass-finished Black Angus **beefsteaks** (cuts and prices vary) can be ordered from La Cense Beef (945 North Montana Street, Dillon, Montana; 866/442-2333; www.lacensebeef.com). For a memorable steak dinner, dine at one of the following **steak houses**: Bern's Steak House (1208 South Howard Avenue, Tampa, Florida; 800/282-1547); Craftsteak New York (85 Tenth Avenue, New York, New York; 212/400-6699) and Craftsteak Las Vegas (located inside the MGM Grand Hotel & Casino, at 3799 Las Vegas Boulevard South, Las Vegas, Nevada; 702/891-7318); Five O'Clock Steak House (2416 West State Street, Milwaukee, Wisconsin; 414/342-3553); Gene and Georgetti (500 North Franklin Street, Chicago, Illinois; 312/527-3718); Gorat's Steak House (4917 Center Street, Omaha, Nebraska; 402/551-3733); Pacific Dining Car (1310 West Sixth Street, Los Angeles, California; 213/483-6000); and Peter Luger (178 Broadway, Brooklyn, New York; 718/387-7400). To order steakworthy **wines**, contact the following: Rodney Strong Vineyards (800/678-4763) for the Rodney Strong Sonoma County Cabernet Sauvignon; Banfi Vintners (800/645-6511) for the Concha y Toro Marques de Casa Concha Merlot 2004; Robert Kacher Selections (202/832-9083) for the Domaine Belle Crozes-Hermitage Cuvée Louis Belle Syrah 2004; Epicurean Wines (206/923-1376) for the Langmeil Valley Floor Shiraz 2005; Quivira Vineyards (707/431-8333) for the Quivira Dry Creek Valley Zinfandel 2004; and Elite Wines (703/339-8150) for the Dolium Malbec 2004. Purchase a delicious prime dry-aged **porterhouse steak** (\$13.99 per pound) from O. Ottomanelli & Sons (212/675-4217; www.ottomanellimeats.com) to make the steak

house-style porterhouse. To eat your steak in style, consider investing in a good set of **steak knives**. Reasonably priced unique ones, such as vintage straight- or scallop-edged Quikuts knives, are often up for auction at www.ebay.com. Also, Knife Depot (800/248-1987; www.knife-depot.com) sells a quality set of Victorinox steak knives with polypropylene handles (\$45.49 for a 6-piece set) that we love. If you're in the mood to splurge on a set of particularly handsome steak knives (\$2,500 for a 6-piece set), look no farther than William Henry Studio (888/563-4500; www.williamhenryknives.com/product/culinary/opus). To place an order, contact the studio directly for an authorized dealer in your area.

Southern Thailand

Adriana's Caravan (800/316-0820; www.adrianascaravan.com) sells the **fish sauce** (\$3.95 for a 23-ounce bottle) you'll need for making the sweet and sour prawn soup and the spicy lemongrass salad. It also sells kaffir **lime leaves** (\$7.50 for a 1-ounce package), **galangal** (\$6.00 for an 8-ounce package), and thai **palm sugar** (\$3.95 for a 16-ounce jar) for making the sweet and sour prawn soup. Order fresh (\$10.50 for a 1-pound bag) or frozen (\$9.75 for an 8.8-ounce bag) fiddlehead **ferns**, depending on the season, from Earthy Delights (800/367-4709; www.earthy.com) for making the fern curry with shrimp. Adriana's Caravan (above) also sells **rice vermicelli** (\$2.50 for a 1-pound package) and Chinese **rice wine** (\$5.95 for a 25.3-ounce bottle; ask for "shaoxing") for making the stir-fried rice vermicelli with black pepper and chinese chives and **dried shrimp** (\$6.50 for a 1-ounce bag) for making the spicy lemongrass salad.

French Home Cook

To make the pear and boudin salad, order **boudin blanc** sausages from your local butcher, or contact Salumeria Biellese (212/736-7376; www.salumeriabiellese.com) to have them (\$5.50 per pound) shipped to you. Contact the Pine Straw Store (706/796-8888; www.thepinestrawstore.com) to order the dried longleaf **pine needles** (\$15.00 for a 5-pound box) you'll need for making the grilled mussels.

Kitchen

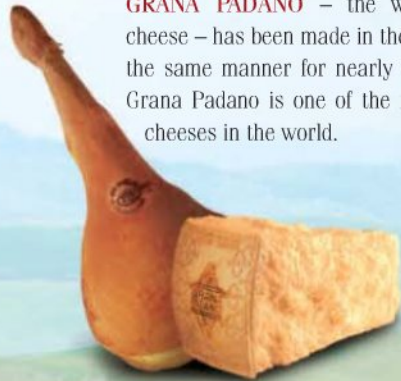
Order **dried shrimp** (\$6.50 for a 1-ounce bag) or thai **palm sugar** (\$3.95 for a 16-ounce jar) from Adriana's Caravan (800/316-0820; www.adrianascaravan.com).

SAVEUR (ISSN 1075-7864) Issue: No. 103, June/July 2007. SAVEUR is published nine times per year (January/February, March, April, May, June/July, August/September, October, November, and December) by Bonnier Corporation, 460 N. Orlando Ave., Suite 200, Winter Park, FL 32789. Copyright 2007, all rights reserved. The contents of this publication may not be reproduced in whole or in part without consent of the copyright owner. Periodicals postage paid at Winter Park, Fla., and additional mailing offices. SUBSCRIPTIONS: U.S., \$29.95 for one year, \$49.95 for two years. Foreign surface mail to Canada: \$38.95 for one year; to other foreign destinations: \$47.95. For subscription information, please call 877/717-8925. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to SAVEUR, P.O. Box 420235, Palm Coast, FL 32142-0235. For faster service, please enclose your current subscription label. EDITORIAL: Send correspondence to Editorial Department, SAVEUR, 2 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10016; e-mail: edit@saveur.com. We welcome all editorial submissions but assume no responsibility for the loss or damage of unsolicited material. Retail sales discounts are available; contact Circulation Department. The following are trademarks of SAVEUR and Bonnier Corporation, and their use by others is strictly prohibited: IN THE SAVEUR KITCHEN, SAVEUR FARE, SAVEUR MOMENT.

Grana Padano Cheese and San Daniele Prosciutto, Italian products so unique, they're protected by law. Original and authentic European Protected Designation of Origin (P.D.O.)



GRANA PADANO – the world's first "hard" cheese – has been made in the fertile Po Valley in the same manner for nearly 1,000 years. Today Grana Padano is one of the most widely known cheeses in the world.



Grana Padano Cheese and San Daniele Prosciutto Experience the Flavor.

To enjoy a chunk of Grana Padano is to enjoy the very best that nature provides; the product of grass, grain, cow's milk and the skill and patience of Man. Every wheel of Grana Padano is made today just as it was a millennium ago...the only changes are those required by modern nutritional, health and hygiene standards.



Using milk produced exclusively within the defined zone of production, from meticulously maintained cows fed a strict diet of the Po Valley's sagey grasses and grains, Grana Padano's flavor is a direct descendent of its environment. A sweet, delicately salty flavor and rich, grainy texture that is more popular with Italians than any other...and one of the most widely known and enjoyed cheeses in the world.

SAN DANIELE PROSCIUTTO – The world-renowned air-cured Italian ham – is also a product unique to its environment. Here in the pre-Alpine Friuli region of Northern Italy, the soft and salty breezes of the Adriatic mix with the fresh, cool winds draining down from the Alps to form an ideal low-humidity climate for air curing that is unlike any in the world. The air imparts a flavor all its own. The only other ingredients are specially raised pigs, sea salt...and time.



Promotional campaign financed with the contribution from the European Union and the Italian Government



Tortellini with Grana Padano Cheese Sauté with Prosciutto di San Daniele

INGREDIENTS

- 1/2 pound pasta dough
- 6 ounces ricotta cheese
- 1/3 cup grated Grana Padano cheese
- 2 egg yolks

PREPARATION

1. Prepare the pasta dough in the traditional way or purchase it pre-made.
2. Prepare the filling for the tortellini: blend together the ricotta cheese, Grana Padano cheese, and the egg yolks. Add salt and pepper to taste.
3. Roll the dough to a paper-like thickness.
4. In a vertical line, place spoonfuls of filling on rolled dough at a distance of about 1 inch from each other.
5. Wet the edges of the dough and fold it in two. Cut the tortellini giving them a half moon shape. Roll them on the forefinger

- 1/2 pound of thinly sliced Prosciutto di San Daniele
- Salt and pepper
- Butter as required

to join the two ends (this will give you the classical tortellini shape). Cook the tortellini in salt water.

6. Cut the Prosciutto di San Daniele into strips and brown it in a saucepan with butter. Add the tortellini and sauté them in this dressing.

PLATE COMPOSITION

1. Place the tortellini in the middle of the plate.
2. Top with slivers of Grana Padano cheese.
3. Serve immediately. Serves 4



Gel Pro Chef's Mats

Love to cook, but hate hard kitchen floors? As seen on HGTV's "I Want That!", Gel Pro Chef's Mats are filled with a soft gel material that makes standing on even the hardest floor a pleasure. Six designer colors with the look and feel of woven leather in a stain-resistant and easy to clean material. Available in 20"x36" and 20"x72" sizes. Makes a great gift for any cook, especially those with back pain or arthritis. Order today! Made in USA.

1-866-GEL-MATS
www.letsgetgel.com



Lacanche French Ranges

Cooking with a Lacanche is an aesthetic experience with a visually exquisite image. With a combination of materials that have been used for centuries, the design is familiar and timeless, yet technologically brilliant.

1-800-570-CHEF (2433)
www.frenchranges.com

Honey from Avanti Savoia

Pure, artisanal honeys are always in season for baking, drizzling, spreading, and simply enjoying. Our liquid bounty includes a broad spectrum of natural colors and flavors. Mildly sweet and packed with proven health benefits, these Italian jewels add just the right amount of sweetness—naturally.

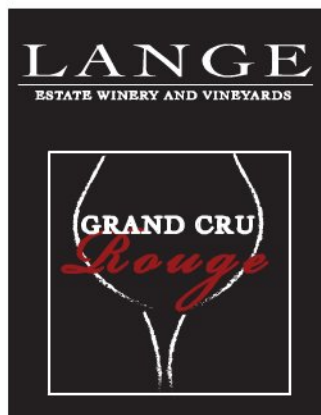
1.800.213.2927
www.avantisavoia.com



Hancock Gourmet Lobster Company

We take the fuss out of eating lobster with our award-winning lobster and seafood specialties. Our Downeast Lobster Rolls include a pound of fresh Maine lobster salad and six New England split-top rolls. All natural and shipped directly to your door.

800-552-0142
www.hancockgourmetlobster.com



Lange Estate Winery and Vineyards

Oregon's finest. Six bottles of premium red wines from Lange Estate Winery delivered to your door three times a year. Each shipment features two bottles of single-vineyard Pinot noir. Join the Cru!

503-538-6476
www.langewinery.com

Triple Creek Ranch

Amid the splendor of Montana's Big Sky Country, Triple Creek Ranch is set on 600 acres of wooded hillside in the Bitterroot Range of the Montana Rockies. Accommodations are offered in 20 luxurious log cabins, nestled among the Ponderosa pines. Guests enjoy comfortable elegance and impeccable service.

800-654-2943 or 406-821-4600
www.triplecreekranch.com



Caravan Tours

Join the smart shoppers and experienced travelers who have chosen Caravan since 1952. Caravan offers fully escorted tours to the United States, Canada, Mexico, Costa Rica and Guatemala. Free Brochure:

1-800-Caravan
www.Caravan.com



RESTAURANT QUALITY BEEF
KANSAS CITY
STEAK COMPANY
 SINCE 1932
 1.800.524.1844
 www.kansascitysteaks.com

Avocado of The Month Club®



- Premium California Avocados
- Gift Boxes & Baskets
- Gourmet Avocado Cooking Oils
- Unique Avocado Kitchen Tools
- Avocado Body & Beauty Products

www.aotmc.com 1-866-714-9921

Experiencing Culture through Cuisine
 hands on cooking classes in Israel - Morocco - Sicily - Turkey
 visits to wineries & artisanal food producers guided walks in great
 historic cities evenings sharing great food and wine

Mediterranean Kitchens
 COOKING VACATIONS

www.mediterranean-kitchens.com

www.italiansun.com

Under the Italian Sun

Custom Tours of Italy
 Specializing in groups, large or small

Toll-Free 800.594.2901



SOLID COPPER
 Heat Diffusers
 and Defroster Plates
 ~Equalized Heating~
 No Hot Spots in your pans
 Copper Conducts Heat Better
 www.bellacopper.com
 805 218 3241



Wildfire Cutlery
 Maker of Hand Made
 Arrow Brand High Carbon
 Tool Steel Kitchen Knives

www.wildfirecutlery.com | phone: 541-488-0781

Purveyors of the wildest
 West Coast seafood including
**King Crab, Dungeness
 Crab, Scallops, Steelhead**
 and **Ivory King Salmon**



Sonny Rinehart Chris Rayson

www.ivoryking.org • 888-262-4122

**AWARD-WINNING RED
 SEEKS JUICY STEAK**



For most, winning prestigious awards is a big deal. For us, it's just another day at the office. As the nation's leading direct-to-consumer winery, Geerlings & Wade sets the standard for providing excellent wines at extraordinary prices, and the judges agree! At this year's New World International Wine Competition, our wines won Nine Medals, including a Gold for our \$9.99 Grass Tree Chardonnay and a Silver for our exquisite Tanglerose Backyard Red, the perfect companion for steak and summer barbeques.

**SAVEUR READERS,
 GET FREE SHIPPING ON
 YOUR FIRST ORDER!**

(Offer not valid in CA and where prohibited by law, call for details)

GEERLINGS & WADE

YOUR PERSONAL WINE SERVICE

Call 1 (866) 409-WINE (9463) or
 shop www.geerwade.com/saveur

Stello Foods, Inc
 PO Box 413, Punxsutawney, PA 15768-0413
 www.stellofoods.com
 1-800-849-4599
 stellofoods@hotmail.com



Producer and
 Distributor
 of Quality
 Homestyle
 Products

ChefsResource.com
 the best place to buy
 All-Clad and other
 gourmet products.



Go online now at
www.chefsresource.com
 or call toll free 866-765-CHEF (2433)

La Cocina que Canta
 The New
CULINARY CENTER at
 RANCHO LA PUERTA

**Culinary Spa
 Vacations in Baja!**

- Hands-on cooking classes in healthy organic cuisine (including seafood)
- Stunning new hacienda-style school on our organic farm
- Week-long visits include all the activities "The Ranch" is famous for, including yoga, Pilates, hiking... 80 different classes in all!
- Located on 3,000 acres of mountains and meadows near San Diego, California

Call 877-440-7778 or visit rancholapuerta.com to see classes, guest chefs & SPECIAL SUMMER OFFERINGS!

Delicious. Delectable. Delivered.

The best olive oils and balsamic vinegars on Earth, from Italy to your table.



www.avantisavoia.com
 800.213.2927

Avanti Savoia
 CULINARY TREASURES FROM AROUND THE WORLD

M O M E N T



TIME 5:39 P.M., November 21, 2006

PLACE San Sebastián, Spain

The talent puts on its game face at the Best of Gastronomy cooking conference.

PHOTOGRAPH BY VINCENT WEST/REUTERS

KENWOOD®

SAUVIGNON BLANC



“We are sooo good together.”